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RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE: 40TH ANNIVERSARY
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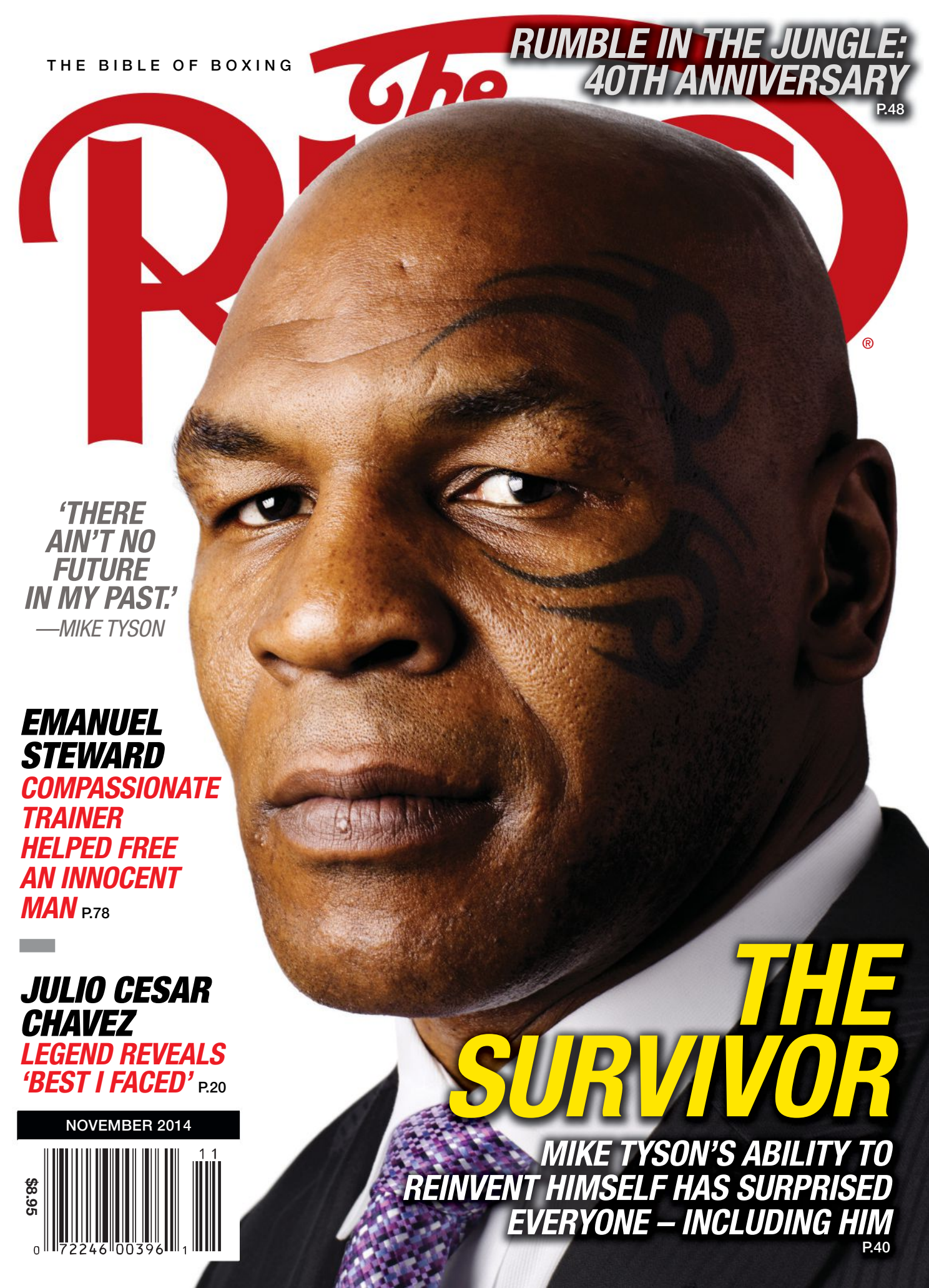

'THERE AIN'T NO FUTURE IN MY PAST.'
—MIKE TYSON

EMANUEL STEWARD
COMPASSIONATE TRAINER HELPED FREE AN INNOCENT MAN P.78

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ
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THE SURVIVOR

MIKE TYSON'S ABILITY TO REINVENT HIMSELF HAS SURPRISED EVERYONE – INCLUDING HIM
P.40

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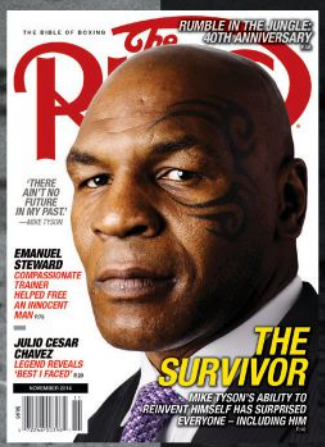

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Muhammad Ali was well prepared when he stepped into the ring to face George Foreman in The Rumble in the Jungle.

ALI: AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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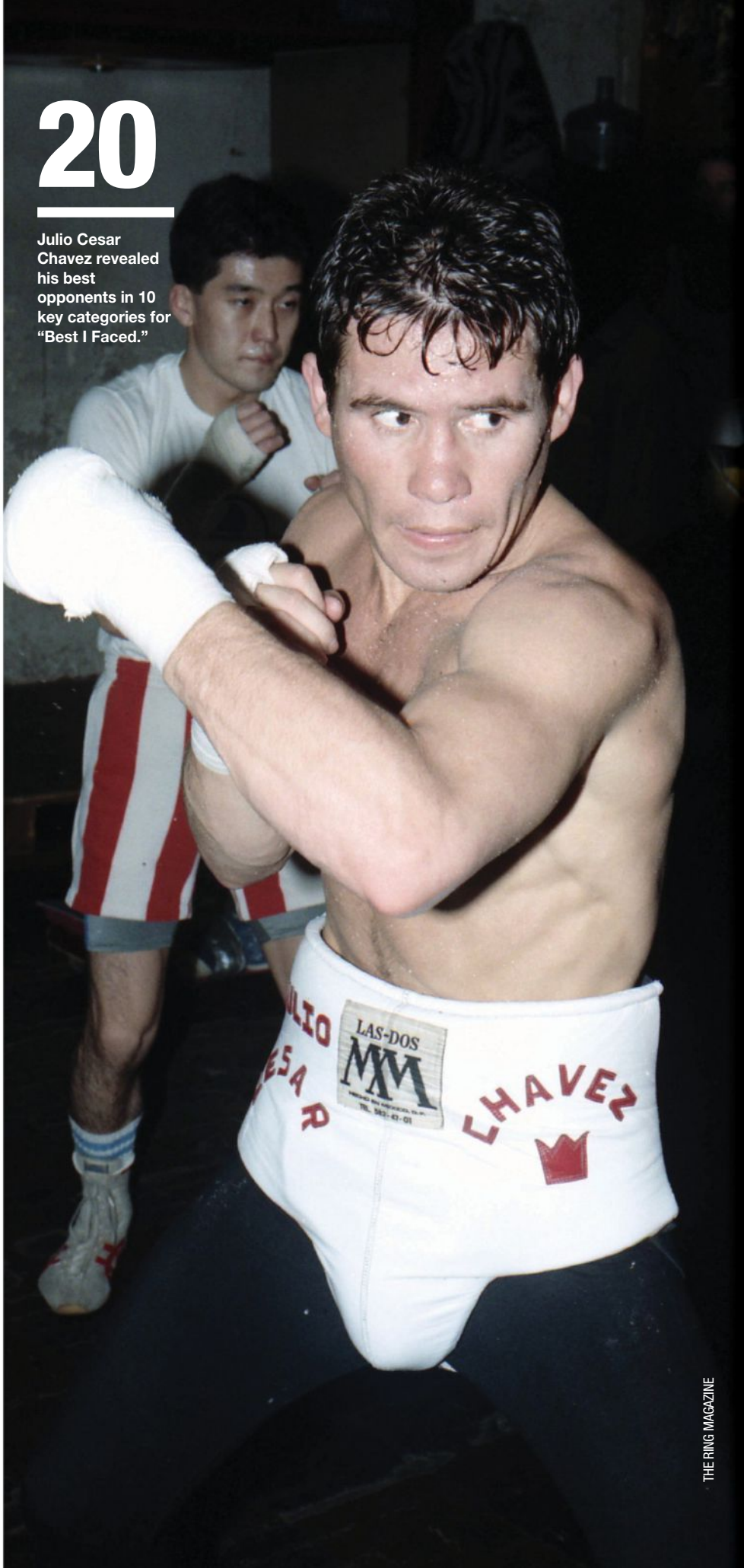
Julio Cesar Chavez revealed his best opponents in 10 key categories for "Best I Faced."



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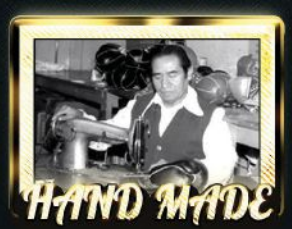

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GIVE TYSON CREDIT

I was one of those who expected Mike Tyson to be either dead or in prison by now. And I didn't plan to mourn for him.

Tyson was truly disgusting at his worst, particularly after he lost the heavyweight title to Buster Douglas in 1990. Of course, the rape of Desiree Washington was a heinous crime. I remember writing a column for the Los Angeles Daily News after he emerged from prison and regained the title by stopping Frank Bruno in 1996. I referred to him as an unrepentant rapist who was unworthy of the once-revered title "heavyweight champion," a disgrace to boxing.

That's how much I despised the guy.

I was at ringside when he gnawed off a portion of Evander Holyfield's ear during their second of two fights, in 1997. That infamous act would've been unfathomable if the culprit weren't Tyson, who many of us believed was capable of anything.

He admitted to beating up women, which we all knew was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of repulsive behavior. And then there was the endless stream of vile words he has uttered, including those about eating Lennox Lewis' children. I was at one press conference during which Tyson ripped off his shirt, climbed onto the table on the dais and yelled almost unintelligible obscenities at no one in particular.

Crazy? Sure seemed like it.

Or maybe this played a role: Tyson also has had serious substance-abuse issues, which undoubtedly fueled some of his many misdeeds. Many of us wondered whether drugs would end his life prematurely. Indeed, the image of him spiraling out of control into a dark abyss and into death simply made sense.

It didn't happen. Neither did some criminal act land him back behind bars.

Instead, as contributor Norm Frauenheim writes on Page 40 of this issue, Tyson surprised us all. He somehow seemed to identify his demons and find a way to keep them under control. He did what he couldn't do earlier in life, which was to surround himself with good people. That includes his wife, Kiki, who is a tremendously good influence on him.

And, apparently as part of his rehabilitation, he has acknowledged many of his countless missteps. He recognized that he was a bad person and took steps to improve. And he has evolved, proving that even the worst of us can turn our lives around and become productive citizens.

This transformation has allowed Tyson to function on a surprisingly high level. He's a devoted family man. His one-man stage show, in which he reflects on his life, continues to be a hit. He is doing voiceovers for cartoons. And now he's a promoter, which would've seemed impossible at one time.

I'll never have warm feelings for Tyson. I saw and heard about too many dark moments to wipe them away. At the same time, the man deserves credit. He's trying to be a better person and apparently he's succeeding. That's all we can expect of anyone.

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JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Yes, that's Manny Pacquiao practicing with the Kia Motors team of the professional Philippine Basketball Association. And he wasn't just fooling around. Pacquiao was named coach of the team in June and was its No. 10 selection in the Aug. 24 draft, making him a player-coach. As if he wasn't busy enough.

British welterweight Kell Brook (right) traveled to the Los Angeles area as the underdog against IBF titleholder Shawn Porter and left with both the belt and more respect.

STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

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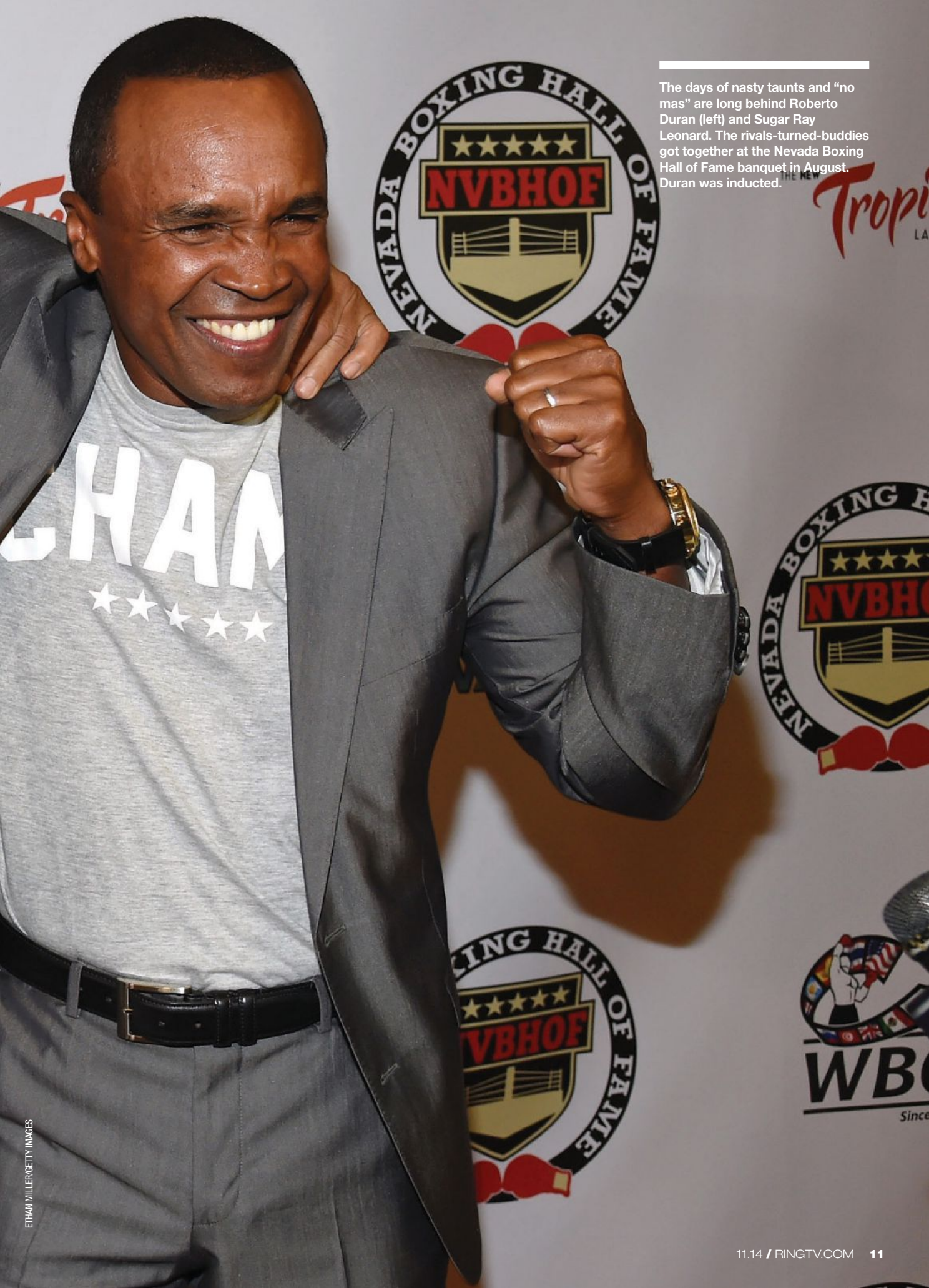

The days of nasty taunts and "no mas" are long behind Roberto Duran (left) and Sugar Ray Leonard. The rivals-turned-buddies got together at the Nevada Boxing Hall of Fame banquet in August. Duran was inducted.

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

COME OUT WRITING

HOPKINS IN DANGER

I am one of Bernard Hopkins' biggest fans. And what he has achieved at his age is phenomenal. But as he readies to turn 50, he and his loyal fan-base have a lot to be concerned about. Sergey Kovalev, his opponent on Nov. 8, can hit; he's 24-0, with 22 knockouts. I think the X factor is this: Can Bernard still hit? Can he still throw the left jab hard enough to make these young fighters respect him? If he can't, they are going to walk right through him. If he can, they will have to back off. If the latter happens against Kovalev, it will become a boxing match. Can Bernard win? Maybe. But there will be more KO artists coming. And sooner or later Bernard is going to get hurt.

Barry Abbott
Takoma Park, Md.

CAN'T WIN

Boxing fans – at least the majority of those who comment on RingTV.com articles – are a bunch of whining malcontents who don't want to be happy with a fight. Example: When Robert Guerrero boxes, they say he's boring. When Guerrero brawls, they say he's limited even though they're crazy for the Arturo Gattis of the sport. Guerrero is just one of many fighters who get this kind of unfair garbage from so many of your commenters. The Klitschkos, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Manny Pacquiao, Bernard Hopkins and too many more get trashed no matter what they do. Then there's all of the tough talk from the anonymous safety of the internet. And the bigotry. Boxers put their health, even their lives, on the line. They deserve better than so many of the so-called fans who comment on your website.

Charlie Newman
Chicago

KAZAKHSTANI ICON

I'm from Kazakhstan and a big fan of Gennady Golovkin. I just wanted to tell you that you have no idea how popular he is in our country. Due to time differences, his HBO fights are broadcast at 7 a.m. on Sunday mornings but still millions across the country wake up and watch him fight. Let me tell you, if he ever fights in Kazakhstan, we don't even have a venue big enough to fit all of the spectators since our biggest stadium only fits 45,000 people. And that's not to mention the TV audience. If Gennady were Mexican, he'd have a bigger fan base than Canelo Alvarez, Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. and Chavez Jr. put together. What makes me sad is the fact the U.S. doesn't have a big Kazakhstani population. Otherwise, Gennady would have already become a pay-per-view star. Also, westerners found out about Gennady only a couple of years ago but we've known him since 2003. He had a stellar amateur career. So, compared to Americans, we have no doubt that Gennady is the real deal.

Arman Kozhakeldiyev
Astana, Kazakhstan

CRAWFORD 'FANTASTIC'

I have one word to describe Terence Crawford's performance against Yuriorkis Gamboa on June 28: fantastic. He has the heart of a champion and he is hungry for stardom. In the fight, he stuck to his game plan by initially throwing solid jabs and then timing his punches as he got into a rhythm. In the middle rounds, Crawford remained calm even though the Cuban led on the scorecards and was fighting effectively, and eventually it became obvious that Gamboa was tired and frustrated. Then came the knockout in Round 9. Crawford was patient and focused. I hope to see him fight Mikey Garcia.

Rommel Vincent Enriquez
Danao City, Cebu, Philippines

MALIGNAGGI DESERVING

For all of the reasons given in the article by Tim Smith (September 2014) Paulie Malignaggi is superb in his professional ring analysis of boxers, matches and the sport in general. You want to listen to what he has to say. As Showtime's Al Bernstein concluded, Malignaggi takes it to another level. I hope we are able to enjoy the commentary of Paulie for many years to come.

Robert Atkinson
Fenton, Mich.

PERFECT RETURN

Very glad to see the return of the "Perfect Execution" series. As an amateur boxer, I am always looking for tips to make me better in the ring. I think the series is also great for boxing fans who want to better understand the sport. You picked the right person in Bernard Hopkins to demonstrate and explain the moves. I will be adding that cross hook to my tool box. Looking forward to future columns in the series.

Roderick Powell
Atlanta

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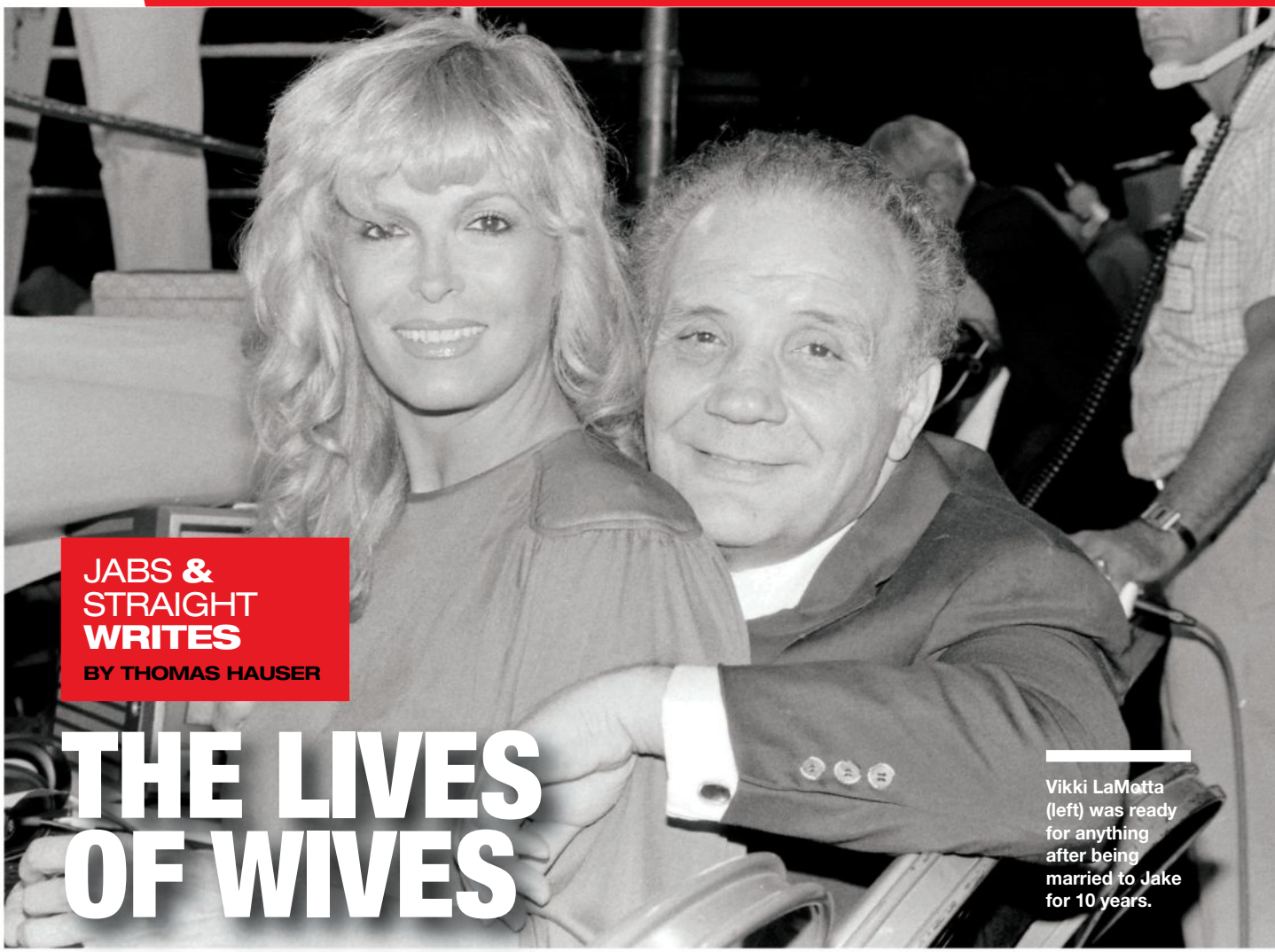


JABS & STRAIGHT **WRITES**

BY THOMAS HAUSER

THE LIVES OF WIVES

Vikki LaMotta (left) was ready for anything after being married to Jake for 10 years.

BOXING SPOUSES HAVE UNUSUAL PERSPECTIVES

Terence Crawford's successful title defense against Yuriorkis Gamboa in Crawford's hometown of Omaha, Nebraska, in June has led to a revival of sorts for Ron Stander.

Stander was a journeyman from nearby Council Bluffs, Iowa, who challenged Joe Frazier in Omaha for the heavyweight crown in 1972. Frazier beat up Stander and knocked him out. The fight wasn't particularly memorable, but a quote from Stander's wife, Darlene, was. Before the bout, Mrs. Stander presciently noted, "You don't take a Volkswagen into the Indianapolis 500 unless you know a shortcut."

Then there's Vikki LaMotta, Jake LaMotta's child bride. A publisher named Donald Fine once offered Vikki a contract to write a book about her life. But Vikki's agent warned that Fine had a justified reputation for being difficult to deal with.

"I was married to Jake for 10 years," Vikki responded. "How bad can Donald Fine be?"

Phyllis Wepner was married to Chuck Wepner in 1975 when "The Bayonne Bleeder" fought Muhammad Ali. We'll let Mr. Wepner, who was knocked out in the 15th round, tell that tale:

"I'd told everybody that, if I won, I was going to rent a bus, put all my friends in it, drive … to California, pick up every female hitchhiker, and party for days and weeks and months. I loved to party, I had two ex-wives and a hundred girlfriends, and I was always known as a big party guy. A womanizer, my wives used to call me. If I'd been heavyweight champion of the world, I would have tried to take on the whole female population of the United States. But instead, what happened was, the day of the fight, I gave my wife a very sexy blue negligee. And I told her, 'I want you to wear this tonight, because after the fight you'll be sleeping with the heavyweight champion of the world.' When the fight was over, after I'd gotten stitched up, 23 stitches, I went back to the hotel. I was pretty much exhausted. My wife was in the room, waiting for me, wearing the negligee. And she said to me, 'OK, big shot. Do I go to the champ's room, or does he come to see me?'" ★

HAIRY EXPERIENCE

The most celebrated hair in the history of boxing belongs to Don King. Writers have waxed eloquent for decades about its propensity to rise toward the heavens and it being proof positive that King stuck his finger in a light socket while the current was flowing.

Among the younger set, Canelo Alvarez is known for the color of his hair. And fashion followers remember cornerman Danny Milano unceremoniously severing Paulie Malignaggi's hair extensions between rounds of a 2008 fight against Lovemore Ndou because they were interfering with Paulie's vision.

My own hair is a bit shaggy and on the long side. I've worn it that way for years. When I was young, I had a "Jewish Afro" (complemented for three weeks in 1976 with a Fu Manchu mustache). My hair is gray now and thinner than it once was. I still like it long. That might be out of style, but it's who I am.

All of which brings me to a really bad haircut I got earlier this year. The barber scalped me. Boxing people run the gamut from kind to diplomatic to blunt to cruel. So I went to the weigh-in for the next big fight at Madison Square Garden with a certain amount of trepidation.

Ring announcer David Diamante was the first person to comment on my hair. He said it looked "all right." But with all due respect, I don't need a guy who hasn't cut his dreadlocks since 1988 counseling me on my hair.

Then Michael Buffer had his say. When Michael talks about fashion and grooming, people listen.

"It makes you look younger," Buffer offered. "Do you remember when we were kids in the 1960s? You had all those old guys wearing their hair long and all it did was make them look silly and older."

Michael was trying to be kind. It just didn't come out that way.

HBO's production coordinator Tami Cotel was next.

"It makes you look so handsome," Tami told me. "Your hair used to have a fuddy-duddy Albert Einstein look. All you need now is a little gel."

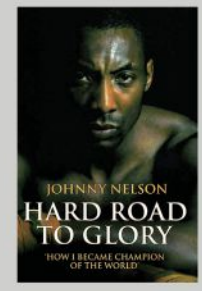
Then Tami ran her fingers through my hair, showing me where the gel should be. And I was starting to think, "This might not be so bad."

At which point, Tim Bradley walked by, took one look and blurted out, "Oh, man! What did you do to your hair? It looks awful." ★

ON THE BOOKSHELF

"Hard Road to Glory" is the autobiography of former WBO cruiserweight titleholder and current Sky Sports commentator Johnny Nelson.

Nelson had only 13 amateur contests, winning three of them, lost his first three pro fights and later endured one stretch in which he lost seven of 11 fights. There were times when, by his own admission, he was just going through the motions.



"I was out of love with boxing," he writes. "I didn't even watch videos of opponents. I was just a hooker, coldly doing the job and taking the money."

Nelson fought miserably in his first title opportunity (against Carlos DeLeon for the WBC belt in 1990). "From the moment I woke up on the morning of the fight," he admits, "I didn't want to go through with it."

Then the fight started. Nelson recounts: "My boxing brain wasn't working. I backed off and threw nothing. I didn't blame people for being angry, especially those guys stuck in dead-end jobs who had shelled out good money in the expectation of seeing me take my chance to make something of myself, the kind of opportunity they could only dream about. [After the fight] I kept myself sane by reasoning that these people didn't know the real me. I found it harder to take when my family joined in the mass condemnation. That hurt because they did know me. Even my mother, who had watched the fight at home on television, said 'I couldn't believe it. Why didn't you hit him?'"

That's refreshingly honest writing.

Two years later, in a repeat of the DeLeon fiasco, Nelson admits that he stank out the joint in a challenge against IBF cruiserweight champion James Waring. After that bout, Sky TV commentator Glenn McCrory declared, "All you can put it down to is heart. He's scared. Every fighter has fear, especially in a big title fight, but that's something you have got to overcome. I don't think he'll ever do it now."

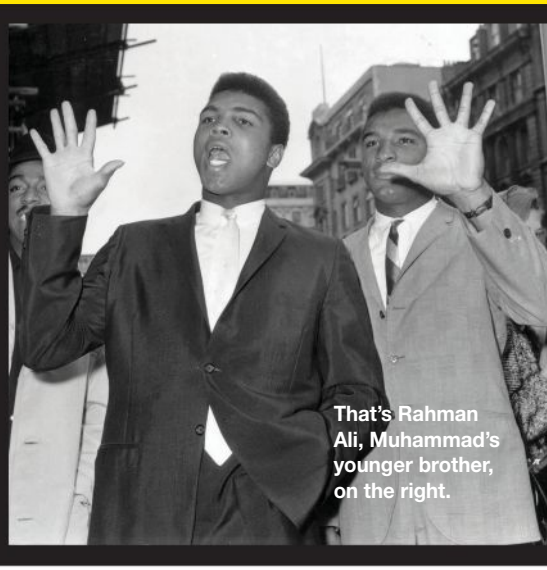
Promoter Frank Warren put things in perspective, saying, "If Johnny Nelson were fighting in my back garden, I would pull the curtains across [the window]."

But Nelson persevered. And his improbable journey turned golden in 1999, when he knocked out Carl Thompson to claim the WBO cruiserweight crown. Fourteen successful title defenses (albeit against mediocre opposition) followed. Then, in 2006, Nelson snapped a patella tendon and his ring career was over.

"Hard Road to Glory" is an honest recounting of a fighter's life, in and out of the ring. I don't like the fact that boxing has more than 100 variations of world champions in 17 different weight divisions today. But Nelson comes across as so likable in the pages of his book that it's hard to begrudge him his belt.

How else can one feel about a fighter who, talking about former schoolmates and sparring partners, acknowledges, "There are a lot of people out there who still find it hard to believe I became champion of the world. They tell disbelieving children, 'I used to beat up Johnny Nelson.'" ★

QUICK QUIZ



That's Rahman Ali, Muhammad's younger brother, on the right.

1. THE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP PASSED INTO NEW HANDS ONCE AS THE CONSEQUENCE OF A FOUL. WHAT WERE THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

« 2. WHO WAS MUHAMMAD ALI'S BROTHER NAMED AFTER?

3. FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.'S BIGGEST-GROSSING FIGHTS WERE AT THE MGM GRAND IN LAS VEGAS AGAINST OSCAR DE LA HOYA AND CANELO ALVAREZ. WHO REFEREED EACH FIGHT?

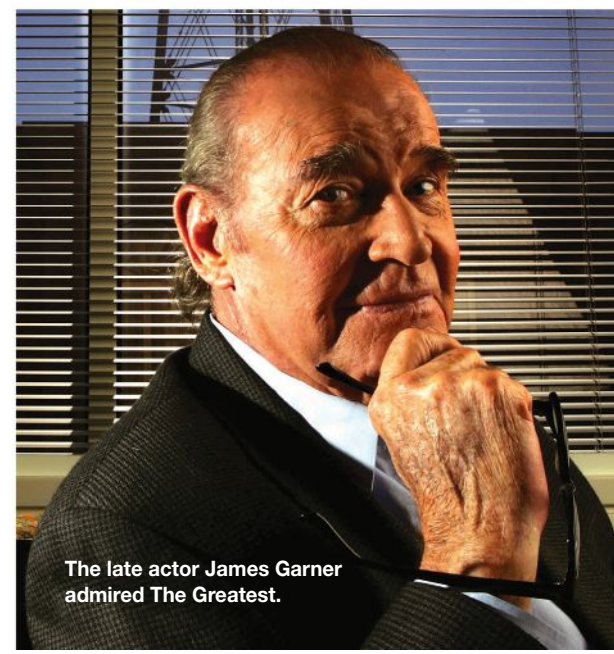
Quick Quiz Answers: 1. On June 12, 1930, Max Schmeling and Jack Sharkey fought for the heavyweight title that had been left vacant by Gene Tunney's retirement. Schmeling was declared the winner by disqualification after Sharkey decked him with a blatant low blow late in the fourth round. ★ **2.** Rahman Ali was originally named Rudolph Valentino Clay in tribute to silent-screen movie star Rudolph Valentino. ★ **3.** Kenny Bayless refereed both fights.

A SPECIAL MAN

James Garner, who died on July 19 at age 86, was an American icon. He rose to fame during the golden age of television in the role of Bret Maverick, an amiable gambler in the old American West. Later, he starred as detective Jim Rockford in "The Rockford Files." His credits include more than 50 feature films highlighted by lead roles in "The Great Escape," "36 Hours," and "The Americanization of Emily." He was a good actor.

I met Garner at a dinner in 1993. The Smithsonian Institution was honoring five great athletes – Muhammad Ali, Arnold Palmer, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Chris Evert and Ted Williams – who had helped shape America. The two-day program included a White House reception, a formal dinner and an awards ceremony, which was taped for television and attended by Bill Clinton. I was invited by virtue of having been the authorized biographer for both Ali and Palmer. Garner, who was a friend of Palmer, was there at the golfer's invitation. Palmer introduced us.

Garner had played football and basketball in high school and appreciated athletic greatness. I told him how much I'd enjoyed "Maverick" when I was growing up, which I'm sure people told him 50 times a day. He was gracious and friendly. But what I remember most about the moment was Garner saying, "I'm just a guy who reads lines that someone else wrote. This man (putting his arm around Palmer) is special."



The late actor James Garner admired The Greatest.

Then Garner pointed across the room to where Ali was standing and said, "That man is beyond special."

James Garner made life a lot more entertaining and fun for the rest of us. He was special. ★

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book "Reflections: Conversations, Essays, and Other Writings" has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

GARNER: MARK MAINZ/GETTY IMAGES; ALI: EVENING STANDARD/GETTY IMAGES

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

10

A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

THIS MONTH: This is the era of huge heavyweights, with Wladimir Klitschko leading the way. Many past champions would've been cruiserweights – or a super middleweight in one case – today. Here are the 10 lightest heavyweight champions at the time they won their titles (for the first time in the case of Floyd Patterson).

1. BOB FITZSIMMONS
167 pounds
(KO'd James J. Corbett in 1897)

2. TOMMY BURNS
175 pounds
(outpointed Marvin Hart in 1906)

3. JAMES J. CORBETT
178 pounds
(KO'd John L. Sullivan in 1892)

4. FLOYD PATTERSON
182¼ pounds
(KO'd Archie Moore in 1956)

5. EZZARD CHARLES
184½ pounds
(outpointed Joe Louis in 1950)*

6. ROCKY MARCIANO
184½ pounds
(KO'd Jersey Joe Walcott in 1952)

7. JACK DEMPSEY
187 pounds
(KO'd Jess Willard in 1919)

8. MAX SCHMELING
188 pounds (defeated Jack Sharkey by DQ in 1930)

9. GENE TUNNEY
189½ pounds
(outpointed Jack Dempsey in 1926)

10. MARVIN HART
190 pounds
(KO'd Jack Root in 1905)

James J. Corbett (left) and Bob Fitzsimmons are Nos. 1 and 3 on our list.

*Charles was lighter when he won the NBA title but was universally recognized as champ after beating Louis.

ADVANCED DEGREES

Everyone knows that Bernard Hopkins became the oldest to win a major title when, at 46, he defeated Jean Pascal to win a light heavyweight belt in 2011. Who was the youngest? Wilfred Benitez, who in 1976 took Antonio Cervantes' junior welterweight title when he was 17. Rev. Stanley Williams of Brooklyn, N.Y., connected Benitez and Hopkins in four steps.

« **WILFRED BENITEZ** fought …
THOMAS HEARNS, who fought …
VIRGIL HILL, who fought …
ROY JONES JR., who fought …
BERNARD HOPKINS »

EMAIL YOUR ADVANCED DEGREES TO COMEOUTWRITING@SEPUBLICATIONS.COM.

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

By **Michael Rosenthal**

GOOD

I'm not sure any other sport can match the camaraderie among boxers after they do battle. I was at the Nevada Boxing Hall of Fame banquet in early August when two sets of onetime rivals were reunited – Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield, and Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran. These fighters had some nasty exchanges in the day. As we know, Tyson bit off part of Holyfield's ear in their second fight and Duran spewed venom in Leonard's direction before their fights. They would have reason for disdaining one another. Instead, they've become friends. Leonard's words were particularly warm when he spoke during Duran's induction. He said: "Congratulations my champion, congratulations my friend." Why the affection? I think part of it is basic respect for fellow fighters; they know the sacrifices – and risks – it takes to succeed. It's more than that, though. I believe fighters and their rivals come to realize they needed each other, that they came together as a unit to give the fans something they'll never forget. They couldn't have done it alone. In other words, they made history as a team. That's a powerful bond.

BAD

I thought Kell Brook gave an outstanding performance against Shawn Porter on Aug. 16, earning a clear victory and a version of the welterweight title. That said, the Briton did something I abhor: hold excessively, particularly in the first half of the fight. That obviously was part of his game plan, to tie Porter up whenever the aggressive fighter charged. And it worked. Porter had difficulty getting much done inside. The problem is twofold. One, it's illegal to hold. Referee Pat Russell warned Brook a few times but never deducted a point. And, two, holding puts an immediate halt to the action as the referee is forced to step in and break up the fighters. To be clear, almost every fighter holds at some point. Brook is just one example. The point here is that it's done excessively. Brook could've fired back to keep Porter off him, which he did more and more as the fight went on. Or he could've used his feet to avoid danger, which he also did at times. The fact he held was unfair to Porter and the fans, who grow tired of the start-and-stop nature of some fights. Referees should penalize holders. Then it will stop.

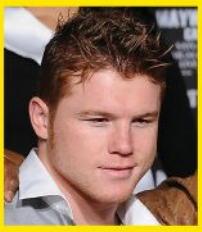
WORSE

The recently posted video of Magomed Abdusalamov undergoing therapy for brain injuries he suffered against Mike Perez in November was heartbreaking. Of course, everyone is grateful that he survived the ordeal. However, the once-strapping heavyweight's frail appearance and obvious ongoing issues were stark evidence that his progress has been limited even after months of therapy. Abdusalamov's attorney told The New York Daily News in early August that the fighter still cannot talk, walk on his own or feed himself. On top of that, according to the newspaper, an ongoing investigation of the circumstances surrounding Abdusalamov's injuries by the New York State Inspector General's office was holding up a lawsuit the family filed against the doctors commissioned by the New York State Athletic Commission and others. The attorney said a settlement would help the family cover growing medical costs. The tragedy evidently has prompted New York officials to re-evaluate their medical procedures. At least something positive has come out of this.

HOPKINS/BENITEZ: THE RING MAGAZINE; ALVAREZ: ROBYN BECK; SANTA CRUZ: JEFF BOTTARI; ESTRADA: AFP

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT



CANELO ALVAREZ

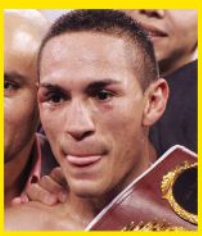
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER

MUSIC - "I like a lot of music. I like Mexican music, salsa, I like Michael Jackson." ★ **CAR -** "I have a couple but my favorite is a Lamborghini." ★ **FOOD -** "Meat." ★ **TATTOOS -** "No. I don't have any." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING -** "Ayrton Senna (late Formula One driver)." ★ **MOVIE -** "'The Shooter,' with Mark Wahlberg." ★ **VIDEO GAME -** "Racing car games."

LEO SANTA CRUZ

WBC JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

MUSIC - "My favorite music is Mexican songs but mostly the ones Vicente Fernandez sings." ★ **CAR -** "My dream car would be a Lamborghini." ★ **FOOD -** "My favorite food is Mexican food like tacos and mole. I also like McDonald's and pizza." ★ **TATTOOS -** "No I don't have any tattoos." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING -** "The sprinter Usain Bolt." ★ **MOVIE -** "All the 'Fast and Furious' movies." ★ **VIDEO GAME -** "My favorite video games are on the PlayStation. I like playing soccer games."



JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA

WBA AND WBO FLYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

MUSIC - "Several: traditional Mexican, hip-hop and reggaeton." ★ **CAR -** "Jeeps." ★ **FOOD -** "Mexican food, especially seafood." ★ **TATTOOS -** "No tattoos." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING -** "Chicharito (Javier Hernandez, Mexican soccer player)." ★ **MOVIE -** "'Rocky,' of course." ★ **VIDEO GAME -** "FIFA soccer."

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

RingTV.com readers were asked to weigh in on the future of the latest British champion and this issue's RING Fighter of the Month. We asked: **Who do you want to see new IBF welterweight titleholder Kell Brook fight?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

AMIR KHAN 36.89

KEITH THURMAN 28.38

MANNY PACQUIAO-CHRIS ALGIERI WINNER 15.02

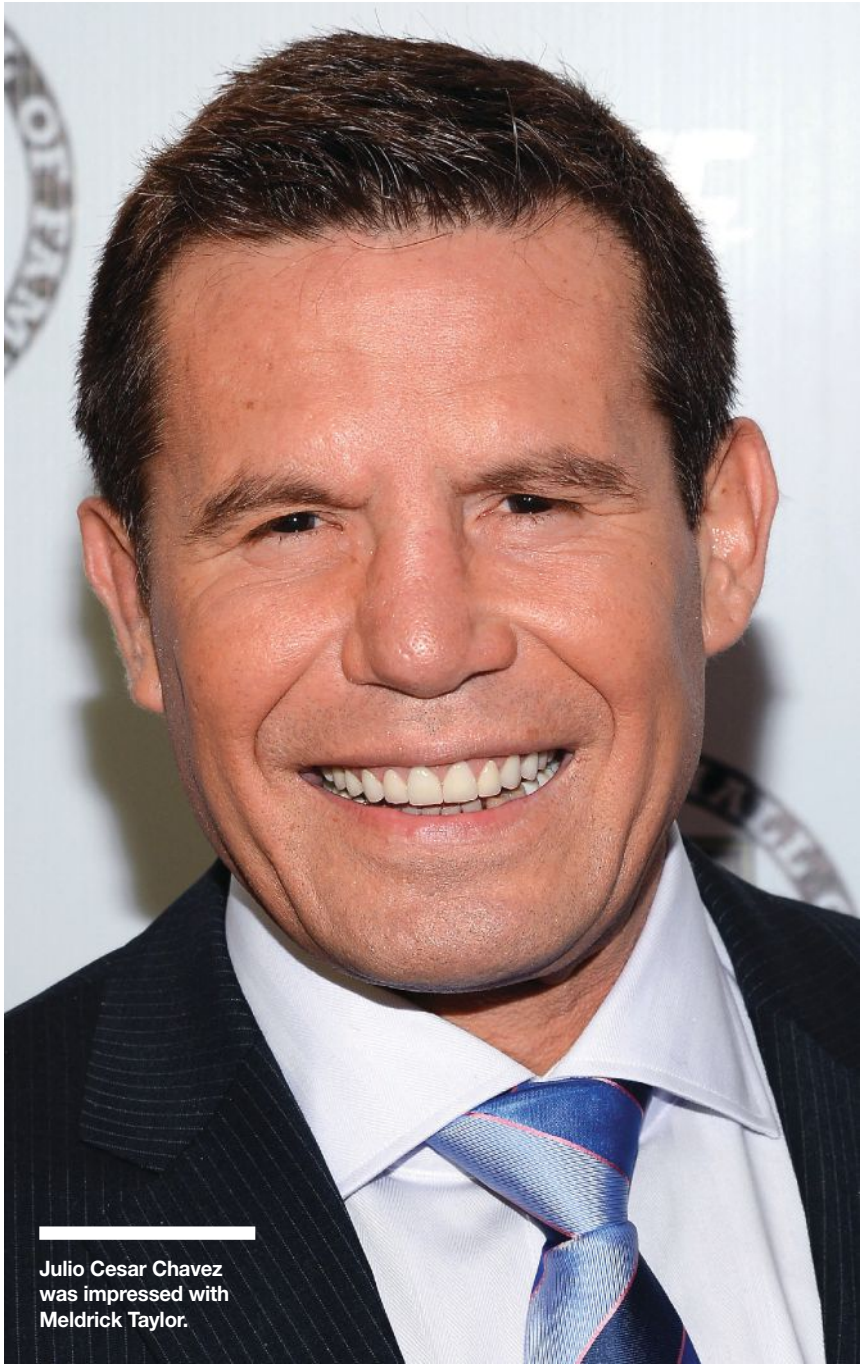
JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ 11.47

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.-MARCOS MAIDANA WINNER 8.24

NOTE: 2,597 READERS VOTED

 By **Anson Wainwright**

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ



Julio Cesar Chavez was impressed with Meldrick Taylor.

Julio Cesar Chavez was one of the best fighters ever from Mexico. When he was active, "El Gran Campeon" was revered in his homeland to such an extent that 132,000 people showed up to one of his title defenses.

Chavez, known for his debilitating left hook to the liver, iron will and granite chin, won seven world titles in three weight classes and went unbeaten in his first 90 bouts.

He won his first world title by stopping Mario Martinez in eight rounds for the vacant WBC junior lightweight title in 1984 and made nine successful defenses over the next three years.

But it was when he stepped up to lightweight that he feels his star grew exponentially. He said his 11th-round knockout of Puerto Rican power-puncher Edwin Rosario for the WBA belt in 1987 was his finest performance.

"I had a lot of great fights where at the end of the night I made it look easy," he said, "but if we're going to look at one fight that shot me to another level, it was the Edwin Rosario fight."

Chavez added the WBC 135-pound title in a unification bout by outpointing countryman Jose Luis Ramirez in 1988 before moving up to junior welterweight, where he would stop Roger Mayweather in 10 rounds to win the WBC belt.

Chavez thrived at 140, reigning for 4½ years and making 12 successful title defenses. It was during that period, in 1990, that he added the IBF title by famously stopping Meldrick Taylor with two seconds remaining in a fight he was losing.

Chavez would also beat the likes of Hector Camacho, Greg Haugen and Terence Alli before facing a monumental challenge in Pernell Whitaker in 1993 for the WBC welterweight title and pound-for-pound bragging rights before a pro-Chavez crowd at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. Most believed Whitaker won the fight, but Chavez escaped with a draw.

That wasn't the case the following year when Chavez took on Frankie Randall, who dropped the great champion and handed him his first defeat, by a split decision. Chavez won a technical decision four months later to regain his crown and stopped Taylor in eight rounds four months after that.

That was in effect Chavez's last hurrah. He was stopped in four rounds by a young Oscar De La Hoya in 1996 in a passing-of-the-torch fight and would fall four more times – against De La Hoya again at welterweight, Willy Wise, Kostya Tszyu and Grover Wiley – before calling it quits.

In the end, Chavez (107-6-2, 86 KOs) fought the best fighters at and around his weight yet compiled one of the most remarkable records in boxing history. He took part in 37 world title fights, more than any other man in history.

"In my day I fought against the best," he said "I can't say I wish I had fought Sugar Ray Leonard because he was way above my weight class or Roberto Duran because they were just way above me in weight. I think in my career I took on the best and beat them all.

"I think my greatest achievement is getting to 90 [fights) as an undefeated fighter. I believe that of all the things I've done the fact I could withstand 13 years of the best challenges, that's my great accomplishment."

Chavez attributed his inability to win a 147-pound title to his size.

"I just have to be honest, welterweight wasn't my weight. I couldn't make 147 even if I tried. For De La Hoya (in the second fight) and Whitaker I made 144½ and 142 pounds and I had eaten breakfast that morning."

Today, Chavez works for ESPN Deportes and TV Azteca. He also provides guidance to his son, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. Away from boxing, he has established two drug rehabilitation clinics in Mexico.

He graciously agreed to speak to THE RING about the best he faced in 10 key categories.

BEST SKILLS

Meldrick Taylor: He had every skill you need as a fighter, his speed, quickness, power, all you could ask for.

BEST JAB

Oscar De La Hoya: Because he was tall and used it to mark his range.

BEST DEFENSE

Pernell Whitaker: He was very elusive, and although I thought he was a dirty fighter, beyond that he was just hard to find and especially hard to hit.

BEST CHIN

Hector Camacho Sr. and Edwin Rosario: I threw everything at them and they kept coming.

BEST PUNCHER

Rosario: Definitely Edwin Rosario. Anywhere he hit me it hurt. Frankie Randall was also a hard puncher. [Against Rosario] it was my youth, it was the fact I was in my prime, it all helped me get through that fight.

FASTEST HANDS

Taylor: It was definitely Meldrick Taylor. I would land one shot and I would take four in return. He was quick. More than anything it was the fact he had real quick hands. By the time I landed one real power shot I was taking five, six in return. They weren't hard shots, they weren't power shots, but I couldn't get in my range, I couldn't get established. In that fight I made a big mistake, which was trying to fight at his pace. That's why down the stretch I was exhausted, I was completely exhausted. I found a way to do it but I was done.

FASTEST FEET

Camacho: It was Hector "Macho" Camacho who had the best footwork. He just dominated the way he walked around the ring. He knew where he was moving, he wouldn't let you find him. And more than anything he was a marathon man the way I see it. He just was not there to be hit. … But in the ninth round he stood and fought and so he was a macho man because he did stand there and took the shots.

SMARTEST

Whitaker: He was very intelligent. And then there was Oscar De La Hoya, who knew how to use his advantage in height and his distance. I think he was very intelligent in the ring.

STRONGEST

Jose Luis Ramirez: He was a southpaw who not only took a good shot but he gave a good shot. The fact he could land a punch and hurt you and take a punch and not be hurt, that was his greatest virtue.

BEST OVERALL

Taylor: I faced everybody. If you look at my record, all the fights I had, I had 37 world championship fights and I didn't hand pick any opponents. But if I was to look at the best overall fighter, it would have to be Meldrick Taylor.

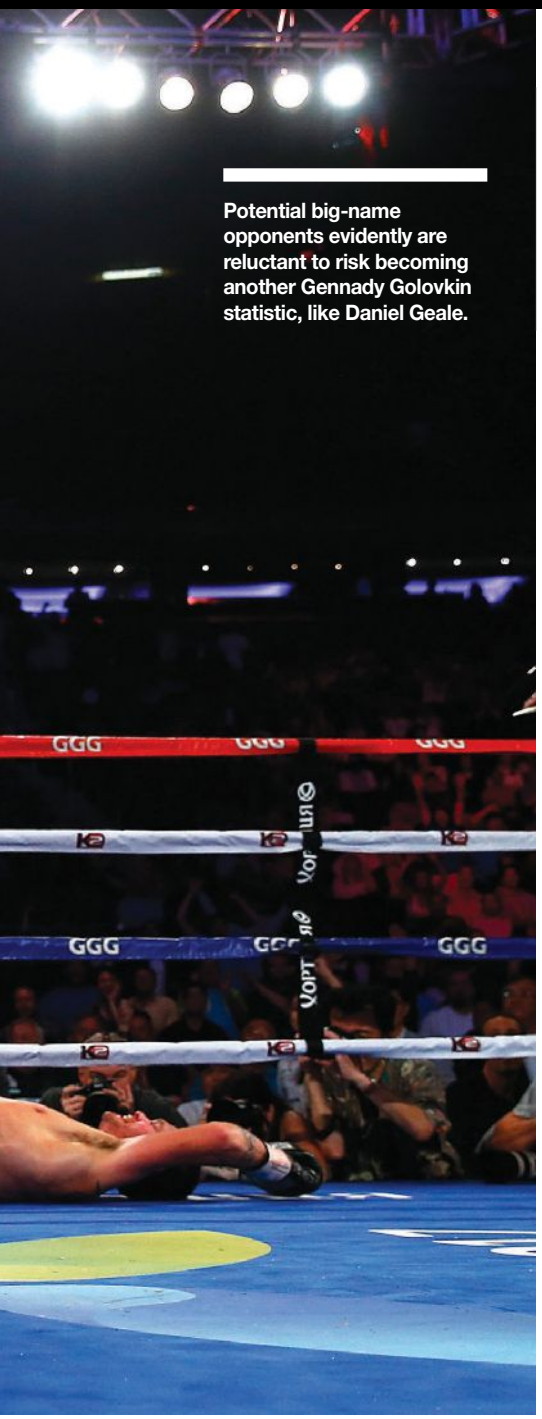
Broadcaster Bernardo Osuna provided the translation for this feature. THE RING appreciates his assistance.

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

By **David Greisman**

GOLOVKIN'S DILEMMA

DON'T EXPECT TO SEE THE TOP NAMES AT 160 POUNDS RISK FIGHTING GGG ANYTIME SOON



Potential big-name opponents evidently are reluctant to risk becoming another Gennady Golovkin statistic, like Daniel Geale.

MIKE STOBE

Gennady Golovkin punches so hard that people are ducking his shots before he even gets a chance to throw them. Apparently the best way not to get knocked out by him is simply not to fight him.

When Sergio Martinez returned from his yearlong layoff, he stayed away from the heir apparent and opted for the biggest available payday.

Now that Miguel Cotto has taken the middleweight crown from Martinez, look for Cotto to take a path that keeps him far away from Golovkin. The two of them won't be sharing a ring in 2014 and perhaps not even in 2015. As valiant a warrior as Cotto has been throughout his career, he'll likely stay busy this year and then either seek a mega-fight with Canelo Alvarez next year or aim for a rematch with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Don't make the mistake of thinking any of the other top names at 160 will be facing Golovkin any time soon either.

Peter Quillin, the WBO titleholder, has a mandatory defense against Matt Korobov scheduled for Nov. 8. Daniel Jacobs, who holds the bogus "regular" WBA trinket while Golovkin has the "super" – or real – WBA title, may end up facing Dmitry Chudinov, holder of the sanctioning body's ridiculous interim belt, that same month. If both win, look for Quillin and Jacobs to meet in a battle of Brooklynite 160-pounders managed by Al Haymon and working with Golden Boy Promotions.

It doesn't matter how often Oscar De La Hoya says that Golden Boy will now work with other promoters and networks in order to make the best fights. No promoter is going to sacrifice a fighter, a world title and the money that comes with it unless doing so is absolutely the best option or the last resort.

One knock on Golovkin is his level of opposition. His team acknowledged that former titleholder Daniel Geale was a big step up in level of competition for Golovkin, who is 32 years old and has spent more than eight years in the pro ranks. It's fair to question Golovkin based on that, though "GGG" is doing to decent fighters what no one else has, a run that is far more impressive than what Deontay Wilder has put together at heavyweight.

It's also difficult to blame Golovkin when the top fighters avoid him and then say they won't face him because he hasn't beaten anyone of their caliber.

Just because a fighter is "The Man" in his division doesn't mean that he's the best. What we have at middleweight now is a situation reminiscent of what we saw at welterweight in 2006, when Carlos Baldomir was the true champion at 147. (Granted, Cotto is far better than Baldomir ever was. And no one should ever compare Golovkin to Mayweather.)

Baldomir was indeed the man who beat the man, and so on. He had upset Zab Judah, who had stopped Cory Spinks, who had outpointed Ricardo Mayorga, who had knocked out Vernon Forrest, who had defeated Shane Mosley, whose victory over Oscar De La Hoya in 2000 had begun the championship lineage anew. Yet Baldomir was considered a fluke, someone limited yet good enough to edge the inconsistent Judah and overpower Arturo Gatti.

No one thought King Baldomir worthy of holding the throne for long, particularly not with Mayweather having recently entered the welterweight ranks. The difference between Baldomir-Mayweather and Cotto-Golovkin is that Baldomir knew facing Floyd would bring the best financial windfall, even if taking the fight virtually guaranteed his downfall.

Cotto doesn't need to stay at middleweight or keep his titles in order to headline another pay-per-view broadcast. Golovkin

could remain toward the top of the rankings without ever getting the shot he's seeking, and he may need to jump up or drop down in weight just to get an opportunity.

Golovkin will get paid well in the meantime, thanks to his contract with HBO. He is scheduled to defend against Marco Antonio Rubio on Oct. 18.

Nothing he does against Rubio will bring him any closer to what he's been waiting for. Golovkin won't get his signature win so long as no one of note is willing to sign on the dotted line.

★

Jermain Taylor and Antonio Tarver are fighting on televised main events in the United States in 2014. Akira Yaegashi and Roman Gonzalez are not.

Blame the promoters. Blame the networks. Blame ourselves.

We'll watch Taylor challenge middleweight titleholder Sam Soliman on ESPN2 in October. Soliman hasn't been seen on American airwaves since appearing on "The Contender" in 2007; he also lost to Winky Wright on HBO in 2005. Taylor hasn't been in a high-profile bout since Arthur Abraham knocked him out five years ago. His time as middleweight champion ended seven years back.

We'll watch Tarver take on Johnathon Banks in late September on Fox Sports 1. Tarver is nearly 46 and will never be a top heavyweight. Banks spends more time training Wladimir Klitschko than he does training himself to face the prospects, contenders and pretenders who think they can beat Klitschko.

I know I keep on harping on this, but that's because we keep on sending the wrong message.

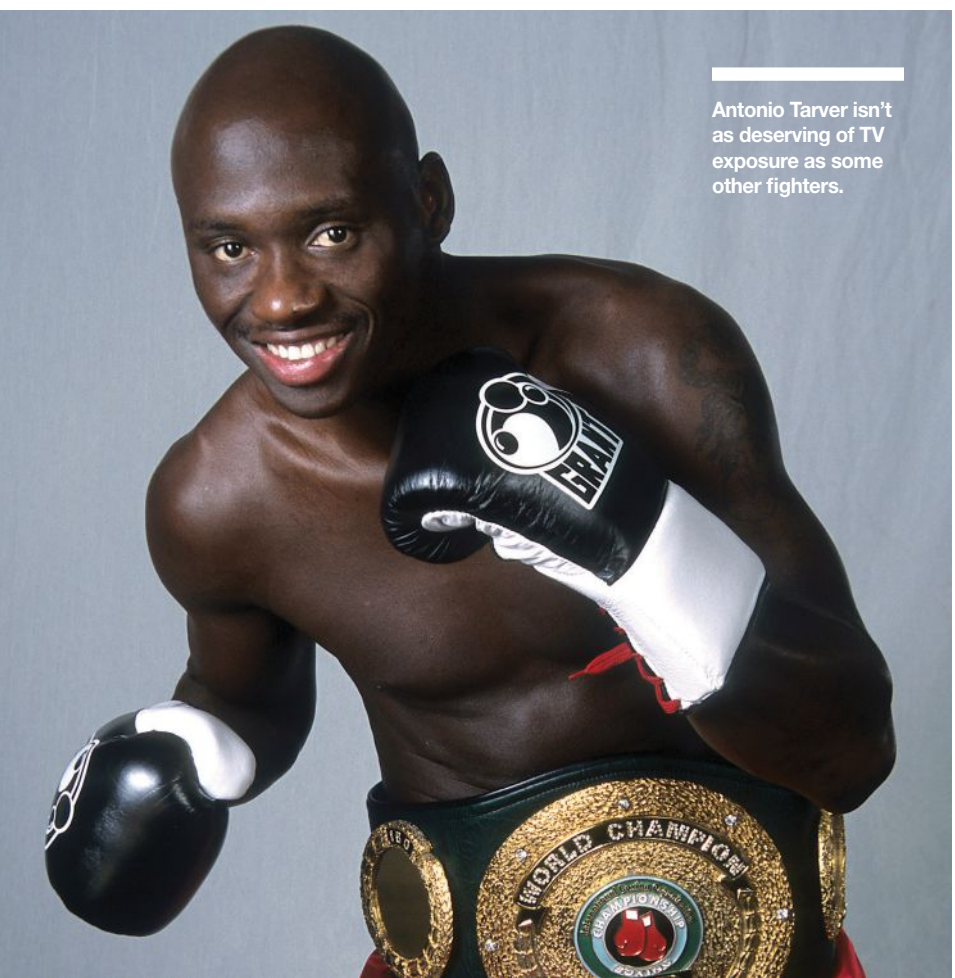
More than 800,000 of us watched a main event mismatch between 140-pound champion Danny Garcia and undersized, undeserving underdog Rod Salka. It went two rounds, and afterward Garcia wouldn't guarantee that he'd immediately go on to face Lamont Peterson. Why would he? He got paid in the high six-figures for Salka. Showtime paid for it and Peterson's win over Edgar Santana in the hopes of ensuring a showdown next. We enabled the network to do so, rewarding its decision.

One week later, a competitive headline bout on Showtime featuring welterweight titleholder Shawn Porter losing his belt to mandatory challenger Kell Brook averaged just 661,000 viewers. Fewer people watched the enjoyable opening bout between lightweight titleholder Omar Figueroa and Daniel Estrada – 341,000 – than did last year's snoozer between Guillermo Rigondeaux and Joseph Agbeko, which averaged 550,000 viewers.

The Super Six World Boxing Classic of years ago, an interesting idea that put some of the best super middleweights in the ring with each other over the course of two years, didn't attract eyeballs either. The wars between Israel Vazquez and Rafael Marquez weren't anywhere near the box-office blockbusters that they should've been in terms of ticket sales.

We'll buy the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Marcos Maidana rematch on pay-per-view despite what appeared on paper to be an uninspiring undercard. And the networks won't shell out relatively small bucks to show Yaegashi, THE RING's champion at 112 pounds, face off against Gonzalez, a power-puncher who built buzz while taking titles at 105 and 108.

We won't be shown better fights unless we show them that it's worth it.



Antonio Tarver isn't as deserving of TV exposure as some other fighters.

TARVER: THE RING MAGAZINE; WARD: SCOTT HEAVEY

By **Brian Harty**

STILL IN LIMBO

Nobody does divorce better than the California court system, but in August a judge once again prolonged boxing's messiest relationship by refusing to annul **Andre Ward's** contract with **Goossen Tutor Promotions**.

It's now going on three years since Ward filleted **Carl Froch** to win the Super Six World Boxing Classic, and in that time the super middleweight champ has fought twice. He blames the inactivity on promoter **Dan Goossen** and a contract that he says doesn't give him enough control over his own career.

Ward twice took his case to the California State Athletic Commission and was denied both times, most recently in April. He then went to the Los Angeles Superior Court and repeated his charge that Goossen had violated a California labor law that limits personal service contracts to seven years (their promotional relationship has lasted 10 years thus far). The court cited a $550,000 bonus Ward had received for re-signing in 2011 and dismissed the case.

In mid-August, Ward changed his strategy and sued Goossen for allegedly violating the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, a federal law designed to protect fighters from the unscrupulous tendencies historically shown to exist in the sport. Ward claimed that since turning pro in 2004 he'd earned more money for Goossen than the promoter had disclosed. Ward also went a bit farther and called for a criminal investigation from the U.S. Attorney's Office. Goossen countersued with a $10 million claim alleging "character assassination."

And so goes the saga of the world's best invisible fighter.

In other litigation news, **Main Events** dropped a lost-income lawsuit it had filed in April against **Adonis Stevenson**, **Al Haymon**, **Showtime** and ex-Golden Boy CEO **Richard Schaefer** after Stevenson pulled out of an HBO fight against **Sergey Kovalev**. The promotional company said all's good now that Kovalev has signed to fight **Bernard Hopkins**.

Kovalev also showed himself to be all good by putting some items from his August win over **Blake Caparello** up for auction on eBay. All proceeds were earmarked for the medical expenses of **Magomed Abdusalamov**, who is still struggling to regain mobility and speech after sustaining brain injuries in his fight against **Mike Perez** in November 2013. All told, Kovalev's gloves, shoes and wraps raised $1,832.50.

Considerably more was paid for the gloves **Muhammad Ali** wore in his loss to **Joe Frazier** in 1971's "Fight of the Century." They sold at auction on July 31 for $388,375.

Manny Pacquiao "got into the cage" in early August, buying himself a piece of a Singapore-based MMA organization called One Fighting Championship. Pacquiao "got out of the cage" to some degree when the Philippines' Supreme Court put an indefinite hold on the $75 million bond the fighter and his wife, **Jinkee**, were due to post following allegations of unpaid income taxes from 2008 and 2009. Both sides will now have more time to present their cases.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. "got into the tub" to demonstrate his bathing technique, which apparently involves a female assistant soaping him up while he brushes his teeth. The video showing the naked Mayweather and Ms. Clean was posted on Instagram, begging the question: Who was holding the camera?

Mohammed Elomar, former holder of the Australian junior lightweight title, has been accused of joining the terrorist group known as ISIS, currently known for its atrocities in Syria and Iraq. The 30-year-old Elomar allegedly posted pictures on Twitter showing himself grinning as he holds a human head in each hand.

In Spain, former British junior middleweight titleholder **Jamie Moore** was shot twice in the legs by thugs who apparently mistook him for someone they wanted to "warn." Moore, who was in Spain as **Matthew Macklin**'s trainer, was expected to fully recover.

Former welterweight titleholder **James Page,** known in San Francisco as "the button-down bandit" for the shirts he wore during a string of bank robberies, was sentenced to seven years in prison.

92-year-old **Jake LaMotta** got a pacemaker in August, prompting his wife (No. 7), **Denise Baker**, to hope for "another 10 to 12 years." A week later the Bronx Bull's death was announced on a Facebook page, but it turned out to be someone's bizarre idea of a joke.

The thing (feud? stalking? performance?) involving **Wladimir Klitschko** and **Shannon Briggs** got weirder after Briggs saw Klitschko eating at a Miami restaurant, sat down across from the heavyweight champ and starting eating the pasta off of his plate, harassing him about a title shot between mouthfuls. Klitschko poured a glass of water over Briggs' head and Briggs went ballistic. In the scuffle with Klitschko's buddies Briggs somehow got broken glass in his feet. The moral is, "Don't wear flip-flops to a fight." Is this real? Who knows, but it's a hell of a lot more entertaining than Ward-Goossen.

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BOXING

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BODY PUNCHING

'IF YOU INVEST IN THE BODY EARLY, THE INTEREST COMES LATER ON IN A FIGHT'

Good boxing demands good technique. A missed step here, an off-balance shot there, and you could be looking up from the canvas. The sport is as much about foot positioning as it is punching power. It's a ballet of fists and feet, of the whole body functioning as one. To achieve that, one must master the fundamentals.

Perhaps no one today has a better understanding of the basics than future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, which is why we asked him to play the leading role in "Perfect Execution."

Each month in THE RING Magazine, Hopkins demonstrates a particular skill and explains how to execute it. Photographs of Hopkins and assistant Danny Davis help you understand the moves.

Also, we have an accompanying video on our website, RingTV.com, which will allow you to watch and listen as Hopkins imparts his wisdom.

This month: body punching. »

PERFECT EXECUTION

Boxing Lessons From **Bernard Hopkins**

Stage 1.

Stage 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BODY PUNCH. If you invest in the body early, the interest comes later on in a fight. The fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth rounds, you hit a guy enough to the body, he starts to wilt. The guy you're going up against can't move and he begins to wonder what happened. It's the body work you've been applying in the opening rounds of a fight. It zaps his energy – that's what the body shots do.

AT RINGTV.COM

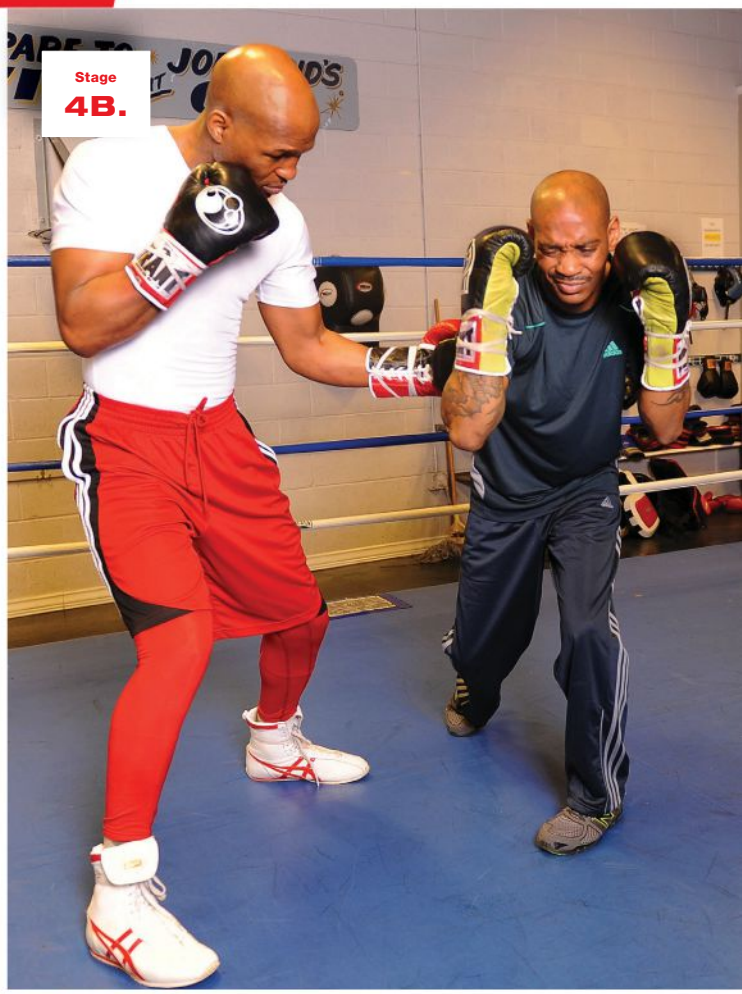
Bernard Hopkins' popular how-to series on boxing fundamentals appears each month in THE RING. We've added a video component to the feature. To watch and listen to Hopkins giving instruction, just scan the QR code below or go to http://bit.ly/perfect-execution-body-punching.

Stage 2. RIGHT TO BODY. I like this punch. You notice Danny tries to hit me with the jab ❶, I go underneath the jab and counter with a right hook to the body ❷. It's always important to get a guy to respect your power. A lot of guys think that they can walk through you, but if you connect with a punch like this, they'll respect you fast. You set it up by getting your opponent to come to you.

Stage 3. THE LEFT HOOK TO THE BODY. Here, I counter Danny's left jab ❶, and I step inside and hit him with a left hook to the solar plexus ❷. It's also about foot positioning, where I don't leave myself out there to miss and get countered. This is a punch that can knock the wind out of you.

JANISE VALENTIN

PERFECT EXECUTION



Stage 4. KIDNEY PUNCH. This is the punch I used to stop Oscar De La Hoya. It's one of the most debilitating punches you can throw. It's a paralyzing shot that can take the legs right out from under you, as you see Danny going down from the punch. Danny misses me with the right A. I step to the side, giving me a complete opening to his side to connect B. If we did this in real time, you'd have to carry him out of the ring on a stretcher C. You have a tenth of a second to land this punch. The aim is the kidneys, the ribs, anything on the side. It's a signature shot that can paralyze anyone. It's not a hard shot, either, but a sharp, accurate shot.

BlackBerry Torch

4Go-getters

4Great fights

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Kell Brook earned the right to celebrate.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

KELL BROOK

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Kell Brook was one of those guys who appeared to be special but couldn't get a good opportunity to prove it. That changed on Aug. 16 in Carson, California, where he challenged IBF welterweight titleholder Shawn Porter.

Brook seemed to have his work cut out going into the fight, as Porter, a pressure fighter who suffocates his opponents, rolled over Devon Alexander (to win the belt) and Paulie Malignaggi

STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

in his previous two fights. He had established himself as a force of nature.

And Brook, who is from Sheffield, England, was fighting in hostile territory. Porter is American.

The fight was hardly a cakewalk for Brook; Porter's punch output and seemingly endless stamina force his opponents to work very hard. That said, aside from a curious 114-114 card by one judge – the British one – Brook won the fight and the title fairly handily.

Porter had his moments but Brook, confident and seasoned, never panicked. Instead, his jab threw Porter off his game, he caught the champ with hard, eye-catching counters – mostly straight rights – and he tied him up when necessary. It was the perfect game plan executed with precision.

In the end, Brook (33-0, 22 knockouts) was the better boxer and more than tough enough to handle anything Porter (24-1-1, 15 KOs) threw at him. Thus, two judges – both American – turned in appropriate scores of 117-111 and 116-112 to finally make Brook a major player in world boxing.

The victory also lifted Brook out of Amir Khan's shadow, where he had languished for years. Now a natural matchup between Brook and Khan would be an enormous event in the U.K.

That's what happens when you beat a hot fighter on his own turf to win a major world title. Brook has arrived. RING

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND FOR POUND: No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Vyacheslav Glazkov (No. 5 last month) wasn't impressive in his majority-decision win over journeyman Derric Rossy (unrated) and that triggered a bit of a dance in the division. Glazkov dropped to No. 7, Bryant Jennings (No. 9 last month) took the No. 5 vacancy, knockout dispenser Deontay Wilder was elevated fom No. 8 to No. 6, Chris Arreola fell from No. 7 to No. 9, Mike Perez jumped from No. 10 to No. 8 and mainstay Tomasz Adamek (No. 6 last month) tumbled all the way to No. 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Dmytro Kucher (No. 7 last month) has been inactive for over a year, so he was dropped from the ratings. Everyone below him rose a notch and 2008 Olympic gold medalist Rakhim Chakhkiev moved in at No. 10, joining fellow Russians Denis Lebedev and Grigory Drozd. Firat Arslan (No. 8 last month) then swapped places with Ilunga Makabu, rising to No. 6 after a good showing in a split-decision loss to division champion Yoan Pablo Hernandez.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Sakio Bika (No. 5 last month) lost a unanimous decision and his WBC title to unrated Anthony Dirrell in a rematch of their 2013 draw. Bika dropped to No. 8 and took the place of Maxim Vlasov, who was removed due to inactivity. Meanwhile, the undefeated Dirrell entered the ratings at No. 6, which pushed previous No. 6 James DeGale up a notch.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Daniel Geale fell from No. 2 to No. 4 after becoming the latest victim of No. 1-rated Gennady Golovkin, who won by third-round TKO. Peter Quillin (No. 3 last month) and Sergio Martinez (No. 4 last month) each moved up a notch.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Undefeated Brit Kell Brook crossed the pond and snagged the upset with a majority decision over Shawn Porter for the IBF title. With his first loss, Porter fell from No. 4 to No. 6 and Brook rose from No. 5 to No. 4.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Defending WBC titleholder Omar Figueroa (No. 5 last month) climbed to No. 4 after winning an all-action brawl with Daniel Estrada (No. 4 at the time) by a ninth-round knockout. Estrada dropped to No. 6 as a result.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No. 8 Jhonatan Romero was removed due to a year of inactivity. Thus, Genesis Servania (No. 9 last month) and Chris Avalos (No. 10) moved up to fill the gap and Qatar-born U.K. fighter Kid Galahad brought his Elvis-inspired name and unblemished record to the No. 10 slot.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: For a couple of guys whose combined mass adds up to a dangerously small heavyweight, Francisco Rodriguez (No. 6 last month) and Katsunari Takayama (No. 4 last month) can fight like angry rhinos and did so during a 12-round war in Mexico. Rodriguez won by unanimous decision and rose to No. 2 while Takayama also moved up a notch, the two of them together ousting Wanheng Menayothin and Denver Cuello from their previous perches at No. 2 and No. 3. Carlos Buitrago (No. 5 last month) also dropped a spot. Cuello, the runner-up to Felix Sturm in terms of ratings longevity, then exited the list due to inactivity. Everyone below him moved up a spot and Carlos Velarde entered at No. 10.

Jason Gavern (right) became Deontay Wilder's 32nd knockout victim in 32 fights.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine • 62-3-0 (52 KOs)

1. **KUBRAT PULEV**
Bulgaria • 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)
3. **BERMANE STIVERNE**
Canada • 24-1-1 (21 KOs)
4. **TYSON FURY**
U.K. • 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
5. **BRYANT JENNINGS**
U.S. • 19-0-0 (10 KOs)
6. **DEONTAY WILDER**
U.S. • 32-0-0 (32 KOs)
7. **VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV**
Ukraine • 18-0-1 (11 KOs)
8. **MIKE PEREZ**
Cuba • 20-1-1 (12 KOs)
9. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
U.S. • 35-4-0 (31 KOs)
10. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland • 49-3-0 (29 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
Cuba • 29-1-0 (14 KOs)

1. **MARCO HUCK**
Germany • 37-2-1 (26 KOs)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland • 49-2-1 (35 KOs)
3. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia • 25-2-0 (19 KOs)
4. **OLA AFOLABI**
U.K. • 21-3-4 (10 KOs)
5. **GRIGORY DROZD**
Russia • 38-1-0 (27 KOs)
6. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
Germany • 34-8-2 (21 KOs)
7. **ILUNGA MAKABU**
Congo • 17-1-0 (16 KOs)
8. **THABISO MCHUNU**
S. Africa • 16-1-0 (11 KOs)
9. **YOURI KALENGA**
Congo • 20-1-0 (13 KOs)
10. **RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV**
Russia • 19-1-0 (14 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C ADONIS STEVENSON
Canada • 24-1-0 (20 KOs)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
U.S. • 55-6-2 (32 KOs)
2. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
Russia • 25-0-1 (23 KOs)
3. **JEAN PASCAL**
Canada • 29-2-1 (17 KOs)
4. **JUERGEN BRAEHMER**
Germany • 44-2-0 (32 KOs)
5. **CHAD DAWSON**
U.S. • 32-3-0 (18 KOs)
6. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kaz. • 14-2-0 (9 KOs)
7. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
U.S. • 24-2-0 (19 KOs)
8. **ISAAC CHILEMBA**
Malawi • 23-2-2 (10 KOs)
9. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ**
Colombia • 15-0-0 (8 KOs)
10. **ANDRZEJ FONFARA**
Poland • 25-3-0 (15 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C ANDRE WARD
U.S. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)

1. **CARL FROCH**
U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
2. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia • 40-4-0 (28 KOs)
3. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Russia • 47-4-0 (27 KOs)
4. **GEORGE GROVES**
U.K. • 19-2-0 (15 KOs)
5. **JAMES DEGALE**
U.K. • 19-1-0 (13 KOs)
6. **ANTHONY DIRRELL**
U.S. • 27-0-1 (22 KOs)
7. **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
S. Africa • 22-0-2 (13 KOs)
8. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon • 32-6-3 (21 KOs)
9. **J'LEON LOVE**
U.S. • 18-0-0 (10 KOs)
10. **GILBERTO RAMIREZ**
Mexico • 29-0-0 (23 KOs)

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MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

- **C MIGUEL COTTO**
  P.R. • 39-4-0 (32 KOs)
- **1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
  Kaz. • 30-0-0 (27 KOs)
- **2. PETER QUILLIN**
  U.S. • 31-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **3. SERGIO MARTINEZ**
  Argentina • 51-3-2 (28 KOs)
- **4. DANIEL GEALE**
  Australia • 30-3-0 (16 KOs)
- **5. SAM SOLIMAN**
  Australia • 44-11-0 (18 KOs)
- **6. FELIX STURM**
  Germany • 39-4-2 (18 KOs)
- **7. MATTHEW MACKLIN**
  U.K. • 30-5-0 (20 KOs)
- **8. MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**
  Mexico • 59-6-1 (51 KOs)
- **9. MARTIN MURRAY**
  U.K. • 28-1-1 (12 KOs)
- **10. HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
  Cameroon • 30-1-0 (18 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

- **C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
  U.S. • 46-0-0 (26 KOs)
- **1. CANELO ALVAREZ**
  Mexico • 44-1-1 (31 KOs)
- **2. ERISLANDY LARA**
  Cuba • 19-2-2 (12 KOs)
- **3. CARLOS MOLINA**
  Mexico • 22-5-2 (6 KOs)
- **4. AUSTIN TROUT**
  U.S. • 26-2-0 (14 KOs)
- **5. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
  U.S. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **6. VANES MARTIROSYAN**
  U.S. • 34-1-1 (21 KOs)
- **7. WILLIE NELSON**
  U.S. • 23-1-1 (13 KOs)
- **8. JERMELL CHARLO**
  U.S. • 24-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **9. ISHE SMITH**
  U.S. • 26-6-0 (12 KOs)
- **10. JERMALL CHARLO**
  U.S. • 18-0-0 (14 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

- **C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
  U.S. • 46-0-0 (26 KOs)
- **1. MANNY PACQUIAO**
  Phil. • 56-5-2 (38 KOs)
- **2. TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
  U.S. • 31-1-0 (12 KOs)
- **3. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
  Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)
- **4. KELL BROOK**
  U.K. • 33-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **5. MARCOS MAIDANA**
  Argentina • 35-4-0 (31 KOs)
- **6. SHAWN PORTER**
  U.S. • 24-1-1 (15 KOs)
- **7. KEITH THURMAN**
  U.S. • 23-0-0 (21 KOs)
- **8. ROBERT GUERRERO**
  U.S. • 32-2-1 (18 KOs)
- **9. AMIR KHAN**
  U.K. • 29-3-0 (19 KOs)
- **10. DEVON ALEXANDER**
  U.S. • 26-2-0 (14 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

- **C DANNY GARCIA**
  U.S. • 29-0-0 (17 KOs)
- **1. LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
  Argentina • 35-3-0 (33 KOs)
- **2. LAMONT PETERSON**
  U.S. • 33-2-1 (17 KOs)
- **3. CHRIS ALGIERI**
  U.S. • 20-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **4. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV**
  Russia • 23-2-0 (16 KOs)
- **5. MIKE ALVARADO**
  U.S. • 34-3-0 (23 KOs)
- **6. ZAB JUDAH**
  U.S. • 42-9-0 (29 KOs)
- **7. ADRIEN BRONER**
  U.S. • 28-1-0 (22 KOs)
- **8. JESSIE VARGAS**
  U.S. • 25-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **9. VIKTOR POSTOL**
  Ukraine • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **10. KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV**
  Russia • 19-1-0 (9 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
  Mexico • 34-3-0 (13 KOs)
- **2. TERENCE CRAWFORD**
  U.S. • 24-0-0 (17 KOs)
- **3. RAYMUNDO BELTRAN**
  Mexico • 29-6-1 (17 KOs)
- **4. OMAR FIGUEROA**
  U.S. • 24-0-1 (18 KOs)
- **5. JUAN DIAZ**
  U.S. • 39-4-0 (19 KOs)
- **6. DANIEL ESTRADA**
  Mexico • 32-3-1 (24 KOs)
- **7. JORGE LINARES**
  Venezuela • 37-3-0 (24 KOs)
- **8. KEVIN MITCHELL**
  U.K. • 38-2-0 (28 KOs)
- **9. SHARIF BOGERE**
  Uganda • 25-1-0 (17 KOs)
- **10. DIERRY JEAN**
  Canada • 26-1-0 (18 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
  Japan • 21-0-1 (17 KOs)
- **2. MIKEY GARCIA**
  U.S. • 34-0-0 (28 KOs)
- **3. RANCES BARTHELEMY**
  Cuba • 20-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **4. TAKASHI MIURA**
  Japan • 27-2-2 (20 KOs)
- **5. JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
  Mexico • 30-2-2 (20 KOs)
- **6. ROMAN MARTINEZ**
  P.R. • 27-2-2 (16 KOs)
- **7. ARGENIS MENDEZ**
  Dom. Rep. • 21-3-1 (11 KOs)
- **8. DIEGO MAGDALENO**
  U.S. • 26-1-0 (10 KOs)
- **9. SERGIO THOMPSON**
  Mexico • 30-3-0 (26 KOs)
- **10. FRANCISCO VARGAS**
  Mexico • 20-0-1 (14 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. JHONNY GONZALEZ**
  Mexico • 56-8-0 (47 KOs)
- **2. ABNER MARES**
  Mexico • 27-1-1 (14 KOs)
- **3. NICHOLAS WALTERS**
  Jamaica • 24-0-0 (20 KOs)
- **4. NONITO DONAIRE**
  Phil. • 33-2-0 (21 KOs)
- **5. EVGENY GRADOVICH**
  Russia • 19-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **6. VASYL LOMACHENKO**
  Ukraine • 2-1-0 (1 KO)*
- **7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA**
  S. Africa • 26-3-0 (16 KOs)
- **8. RONNY RIOS**
  U.S. • 23-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **9. LEE SELBY**
  U.K. • 19-1-0 (7 KOs)
- **10. MARVIN SONSONA**
  Phil. • 19-1-1 (15 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

- **C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
  Cuba • 14-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **1. CARL FRAMPTON**
  U.K. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **2. LEO SANTA CRUZ**
  U.S. • 27-0-1 (15 KOs)
- **3. KIKO MARTINEZ**
  Spain • 31-4-0 (23 KOs)
- **4. SCOTT QUIGG**
  U.K. • 28-0-2 (21 KOs)
- **5. VICTOR TERRAZAS**
  Mexico • 37-3-1 (21 KOs)
- **6. CRISTIAN MIJARES**
  Mexico • 50-8-2 (25 KOs)
- **7. JEFFREY MATHEBULA**
  S. Africa • 27-5-2 (14 KOs)
- **8. GENESIS SERVANIA**
  Phil. • 24-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **9. CHRIS AVALOS**
  U.S. • 24-2-0 (18 KOs)
- **10. KID GALAHAD**
  U.K. • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

**** The record shown for Vasyl Lomachenko is the one listed by boxrec.com. However, Lomachenko was paid to participate in the World Series of Boxing six times during 2013, with a record of 6-0.***

RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama • 35-2-1 (12 KOs)
2. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
Japan • 21-0-2 (16 KOs)
3. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan • 32-1-0 (17 KOs)
4. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
Phil. • 34-3-3 (20 KOs)
5. **HUGO RUIZ**
Mexico • 34-2-0 (30 KOs)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana • 29-5-0 (22 KOs)
7. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
U.K. • 24-2-1 (11 KOs)
8. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
Japan • 30-0-0 (19 KOs)
9. **JULIO CEJA**
Mexico • 27-1-0 (25 KOs)
10. **RYOSUKE IWASA**
Japan • 17-1-0 (10 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina • 42-1-2 (23 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
Mexico • 30-0-0 (24 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
Thailand • 27-4-1 (25 KOs)
4. **ZOLANI TETE**
S. Africa • 19-3-0 (16 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR.**
Mexico • 17-2-1 (9 KOs)
6. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
Phil. • 25-0-0 (14 KOs)
7. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand • 54-1-1 (20 KOs)
8. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
Mexico • 29-2-0 (24 KOs)
9. **MCJOE ARROYO**
P.R. • 15-0-0 (8 KOs)
10. **KOHEI KONO**
Japan • 30-8-0 (13 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
Japan • 20-3-0 (10 KOs)

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua • 39-0-0 (33 KOs)
2. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
Mexico • 26-2-0 (19 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
U.S. • 34-4-0 (20 KOs)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico • 50-8-0 (30 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina • 34-1-0 (18 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
S. Africa • 30-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
Thailand • 13-0-0 (5 KOs)
8. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
Japan • 18-2-1 (11 KOs)
9. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
Mexico • 32-3-1 (28 KOs)
10. **MILAN MELINDO**
Phil. • 31-1-0 (12 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C **DONNIE NIETES**
Phil. • 33-1-4 (19 KOs)

1. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
Phil. • 20-2-0 (12 KOs)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
Japan • 14-1-0 (9 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
Mexico • 19-2-1 (10 KOs)
4. **NAOYA INOUE**
Japan • 6-0-0 (5 KOs)
5. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
Mexico • 29-3-1 (18 KOs)
6. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
Mexico • 22-1-1 (14 KOs)
7. **FELIX ALVARADO**
Nicaragua • 18-2-0 (15 KOs)
8. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
Peru • 32-8-0 (13 KOs)
9. **TAKUMA INOUE**
Japan • 2-0-0 (0 KOs)
10. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
Phil. • 21-1-1 (16 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C **(VACANT)**

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
S. Africa • 26-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ**
Mexico • 16-2-0 (11 KOs)
3. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan • 27-7-0 (10 KOs)
4. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
Thailand • 35-0-0 (11 KOs)
5. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
Nicaragua • 27-0-1 (16 KOs)
6. **OSVALDO NOVOA**
Mexico • 14-4-1 (9 KOs)
7. **MERLITO SABILLO**
Phil. • 23-1-1 (12 KOs)
8. **RYUJI HARA**
Japan • 18-0-0 (10 KOs)
9. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
Mexico • 29-5-0 (21 KOs)
10. **CARLOS VELARDE**
Mexico • 26-3-1 (14 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. • 46-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **ANDRE WARD**
U.S. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine • 62-3-0 (52 KOs)
4. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Phil. • 56-5-2 (38 KOs)
5. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. • 31-1-0 (12 KOs)
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)
7. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba • 14-0-0 (9 KOs)
8. **CARL FROCH**
U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
9. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua • 39-0-0 (33 KOs)
10. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
Mexico • 44-1-1 (31 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

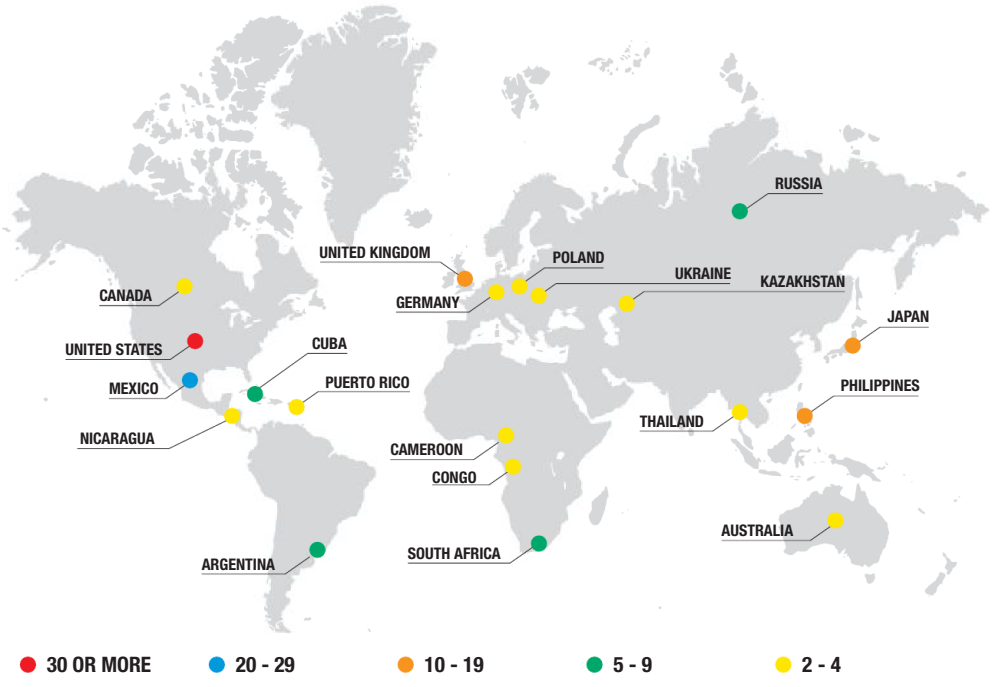
A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	40*	↑ 1
●	MEXICO	30	↑ 1
●	UNITED KINGDOM	15	↑ 1
●	JAPAN	14	
●	PHILIPPINES	11	↓ 1
●	RUSSIA	9	
●	SOUTH AFRICA	7	
●	ARGENTINA	5	
●	CUBA	5	
●	CANADA	4	
●	GERMANY	4	
●	THAILAND	4	
●	UKRAINE	4	↓ 1
●	NICARAGUA	3	
●	POLAND	3	
●	PUERTO RICO	3	
●	AUSTRALIA	2	
●	CAMEROON	2	
●	CONGO	2	
●	KAZAKHSTAN	2	
	ARMENIA	1	
	BULGARIA	1	
	COLOMBIA	1	↓ 1
	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1	
	GHANA	1	
	JAMAICA	1	
	MALAWI	1	
	PANAMA	1	
	PERU	1	
	SPAIN	1	
	UGANDA	1	
	VENEZUELA	1	

Out (from last month): *Ukraine (Dmytro Kucher, cruiserweight); Russia (Maxim Vlasov, super middleweight); Colombia (Jhonatan Romero, junior featherweight), Philippines (Denver Cuello, strawweight).* ***In:*** *Russia (Rakhim Chakhkiev, cruiserweight); U.S. (Anthony Dirrell, super middleweight); U.K. (Kid Galahad, junior featherweight); Mexico (Carlos Velarde, strawweight).*

** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight and welterweight).*



EAST VS. WEST

The production of good boxers isn't restricted to one region of the United States. Of the 39 American fighters rated by THE RING, 21 hail from west of the Mississippi River and 18 are from locales to the east. Here is how it breaks down.

DIVISION	WEST	EAST
HEAVYWEIGHTS	1	2
CRUISERWEIGHTS	0	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	3
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	2
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	5	3
WELTERWEIGHTS	3	3
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	2	5
LIGHTWEIGHTS	3	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	0
FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	0
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	0
BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	0
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	0
FLYWEIGHTS	1	0
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	0
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	0
TOTAL	21	19

Note: Mayweather, who is from Michigan, is champion in the junior middleweight and welterweight divisions. Thus, he is counted twice here and the total tally is 21-19.

SENIOR CENTER

A quick look at the ages of THE RING champions or No. 1-rated fighters where the title is vacant indicates that it takes time to climb to the top. The average age of these 16 boxers (Floyd Mayweather Jr. is champ in two divisions) is a ripe 32. And the age range is a not-so-young 26 to 39. Here are the fighters (youngest to oldest as of Aug. 31):

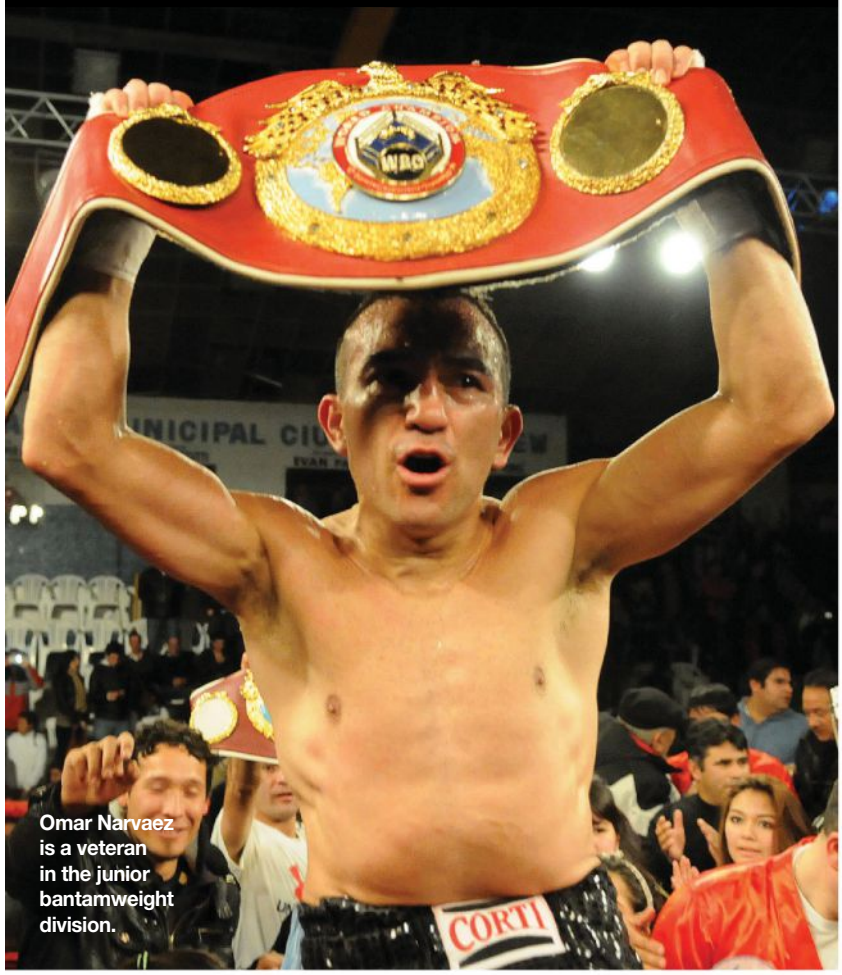
26 HEKKIE BUDLER, STRAWWEIGHT (NO. 1)
26 DANNY GARCIA, JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
27 MIGUEL VAZQUEZ, LIGHTWEIGHT (NO. 1)
29 ANSELMO MORENO, BANTAMWEIGHT (NO. 1)
29 YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ, CRUISERWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
30 ANDRE WARD, SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
31 AKIRA YAEGASHI, FLYWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
32 DONNIE NIETES, JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
32 JHONNY GONZALEZ, FEATHERWEIGHT (NO. 1)
33 MIGUEL COTTO, MIDDLEWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
33 GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX, JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
34 TAKASHI UCHIYAMA, JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT (NO. 1)
36 ADONIS STEVENSON, LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
37 FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR., WELTERWEIGHT AND JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
38 WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO, HEAVYWEIGHT (CHAMPION)
39 OMAR NARVAEZ, JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT (NO. 1)

JOERN POLLEX/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

FOCUS ON . . .

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 115-pounders.



Omar Narvaez is a veteran in the junior bantamweight division.

MOST WEEKS RATED: OMAR NARVAEZ **221**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: MCJOE ARROYO **10**

OLDEST: NARVAEZ **39**

YOUNGEST: JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ **23**

MOST FIGHTS: OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI **56**

FEWEST FIGHTS: ARROYO **15**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: CARLOS CUADRAS, ARTHUR VILLANUEVA, ARROYO **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: KOHEI KONO **78.9 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI **25**

FEWEST KOS: ARROYO **8**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: CUADRAS **30**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: CUADRAS (WBC), KONO (WBA), NARVAEZ (WBO), ZOLANI TETE (IBF)

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): PAUL BUTLER, SHO ISHIDA, IVAN MORALES, JOSE SALGADO, DAVID SANCHEZ

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Gennady Golovkin

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIKEY GARCIA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

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LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
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WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

LEM SATTERFIELD RINGTV.COM STAFF WRITER

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LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

NARVAEZ: JULIO ARRATIVE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; GOLOVKIN: MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES

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Mike Tyson is playing the role of productive citizen well.

STILL STANDING

MANY OF THOSE WHO FOLLOWED MIKE TYSON AT HIS WORST EXPECTED HIM TO BE DEAD OR IN PRISON BY NOW. INSTEAD, IN PERHAPS HIS GREATEST VICTORY, HE IS THRIVING.

By **Norm Frauenheim**

It's been a life full of roles. But Mike Tyson didn't rehearse them. There was never much of a chance to do that. There were just too many roles and never enough time. Tyson had to live them, one after another, in an unscripted, extemporaneous fashion. Hiding wasn't an option, not even behind a facial tattoo that became more of an identity than a disguise.

From the Planet's Baddest to its Saddest and everything in between, Tyson has always been a surprise, even to himself. Today, he's 48, or eight years older than the most optimistic expectations everybody had for him a couple of decades ago when he was a fighter with a lifestyle that seemed to dictate an early doom. Then it looked as if Tyson would get to his grave faster than the lonely heavyweight champion he once admired. Sonny Liston died at 40.

In the end, however, Tyson didn't follow Liston despite prison, drugs and personal demons. All the signs seemed to say that Tyson couldn't avoid what he seemed to want so desperately. But he never arrived at his predicted demise. In a bigger upset than his loss to Buster Douglas, he has become everything we never thought he could be. He's a dad and an actor. He's even a boxing promoter. Mostly, he's a survivor and that's the biggest surprise of all.

"Let's be men about this," said Tyson, who I covered during his time in Phoenix in the late 1990s. "Be honest. You didn't think we'd one day be talking to each other like we are right now. Did you? Come on now, be real. You thought I'd be dead, right? Hey, I thought I'd be dead."

Being real isn't easy. Tyson's crazy life is testament to that. He proves again and again that he doesn't know how to be anything but real. Director Spike Lee calls him the world's most honest man, which is a title that is probably a lot harder to retain than the world's heavyweight crown. But that honesty provides a clue as to why his celebrity endures and how he survives.

His meltdowns, like his losses, have been public. He has screamed at defeat with every imaginable profanity. He spit at it. Bit at it, too. In the end, however, there was always that honesty, edgy and resilient enough to accept consequences and move on to whatever was next.

The resilience has been expressed repeatedly with genuine interest in the endless variety of roles thrown at him. Tyson was never known for comebacks in the ring. But endless comebacks outside of it are the story of the person we know today. He bit off Evander Holyfield's ear

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

and promised to eat Lennox Lewis' children near the end of a boxing career that he grew to hate almost as much as he would later say he hated himself. For years, he told the media his life was a waste. That became his mantra. It got old, but the honesty was real enough for him to move beyond the personal wasteland. He began to discover what was there, first and foremost, as a dad with six kids.

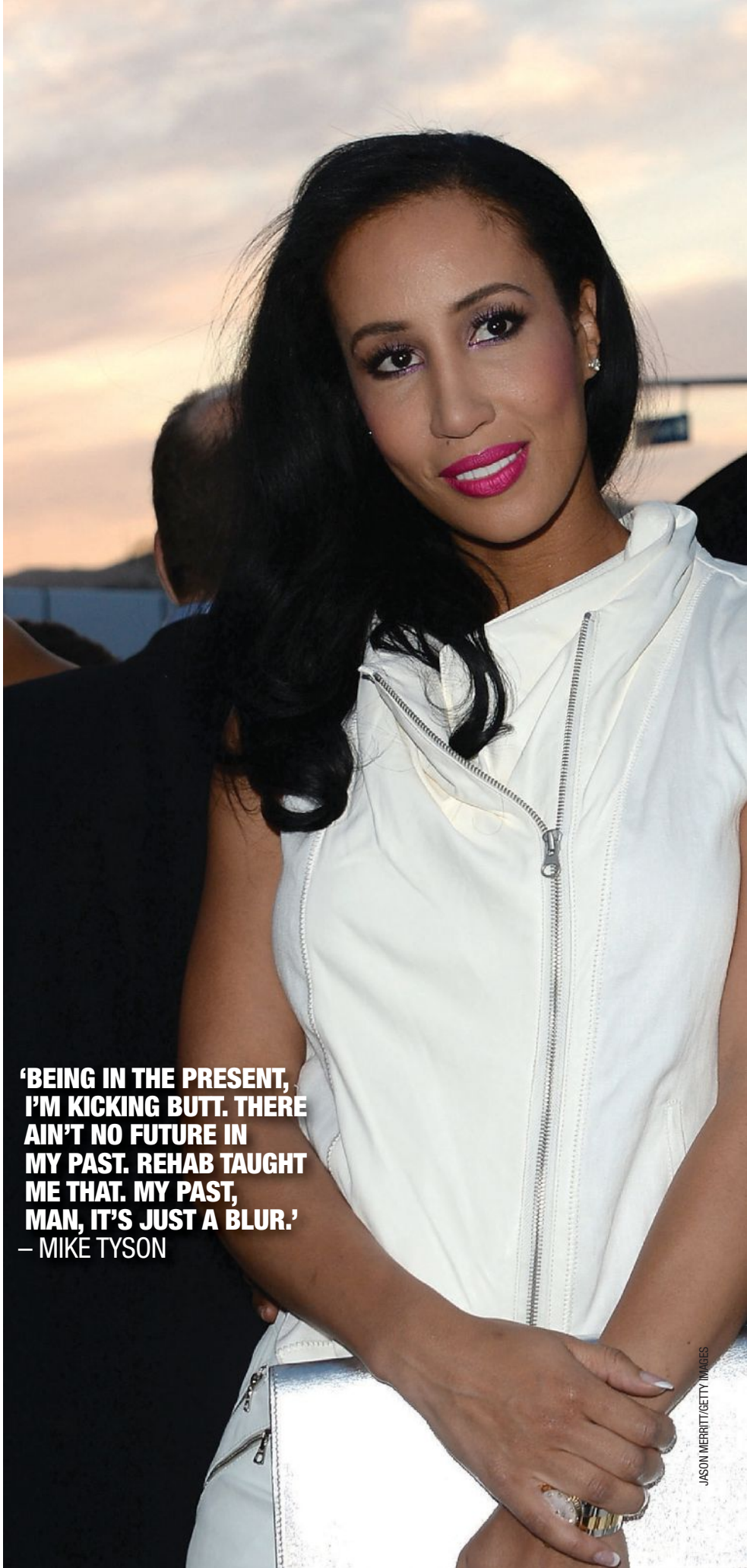
The loss of a seventh child, Exodus, in May 2009 in an accident on a treadmill in Phoenix represents a turning point. He married Kiki, his third wife, a few weeks after the tragedy. In a New York Times story a couple of years later, Tyson talked about Exodus in the present tense. It's an expression of love for a daughter and perhaps an appreciation of life in the here-and-now. Tyson, a family man with a home in a Las Vegas suburb, doesn't want to talk much about his boxing career anymore. Don't ask him about his favorite fights or where he ranks all-time among history's greatest heavyweights.

"Being in the present, I'm kicking butt," said Tyson, who is beginning to look almost grandfatherly with silver gray in whiskers surrounding a smile that no longer includes the gold-capped teeth. "There ain't no future in my past. Rehab taught me that. My past, man, it's just a blur."

Now he's a dad worried for sons confronted by violence that comes in different ways and from different circumstances than what he saw when he was a thug growing up without a father's guidance on the streets of Bedford-Stuveysant in Brooklyn. Yet, the danger is the same.

In a tweet during riots in mid-August that followed the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Tyson said: "Another senseless murder #MichaelBrown #Ferguson. I have teenage boys. Scary. Better Laws to protect our sons need to be in place. #pray"

Being a concerned dad also means



'BEING IN THE PRESENT, I'M KICKING BUTT. THERE AIN'T NO FUTURE IN MY PAST. REHAB TAUGHT ME THAT. MY PAST, MAN, IT'S JUST A BLUR.'
– MIKE TYSON

JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES

Tyson's wife, Kiki, has helped keep him grounded.

providing for sons and daughters. He's a working man. He has to be. According to media reports and sources within the boxing business, Tyson earned between $300 million and $400 million in the ring. He declared bankruptcy in 2003 with a reported debt of $27 million, much of it to the Internal Revenue Service. He pays the bills now with many jobs, including memorable roles in two films, "The Hangover" and "The Hangover: Part II." There's a memoir, "Undisputed Truth," which became a Broadway show directed by Lee. Tyson, so often a one-man show on the ring's canvas, has dominated the stage in a one-man production.

Now, there are reported plans for a film starring Jamie Foxx, who first approached him about the possibility while Tyson was living and training in Phoenix. He's also the voice in his own animated series, "Mike Tyson Mysteries," on the Cartoon Network's "Adult Swim." Tyson's character is a super-hero, a caped crusader who combats crime in a partnership with a pigeon, an appropriate symbol – almost a totem – for Tyson, whose identity is tied to the days when he raised pigeons in a coop on a Brooklyn rooftop.

The unexpected twist is Tyson's foray into the promotional business. If you asked him a decade ago whether he would rather come back as a pigeon or a promoter, it would have been pigeon every time. He learned about the business from Don King, whom he later sued for $50 million and condemned in "Undisputed Truth" as "wretched, slimy, reptilian." No translation necessary. Tyson doesn't exactly look upon King as a mentor.

Yet Tyson entered King's business in 2013 as the face of Iron Mike Productions in a partnership with Garry Jonas, a south Florida businessman and founder of

Acquinity Interactive, an internet marketing enterprise.

"This is something I never, ever anticipated," said Tyson, who began 2014 with 17 fighters under contract. "But I'm loving it. I really like interacting with young fighters. It's like going to school. I'm learning and I like that."

Safe to say, Tyson's promotional model is rooted in his own experience, which includes what he disliked about King and even himself. Yeah, he learned a lot from King.

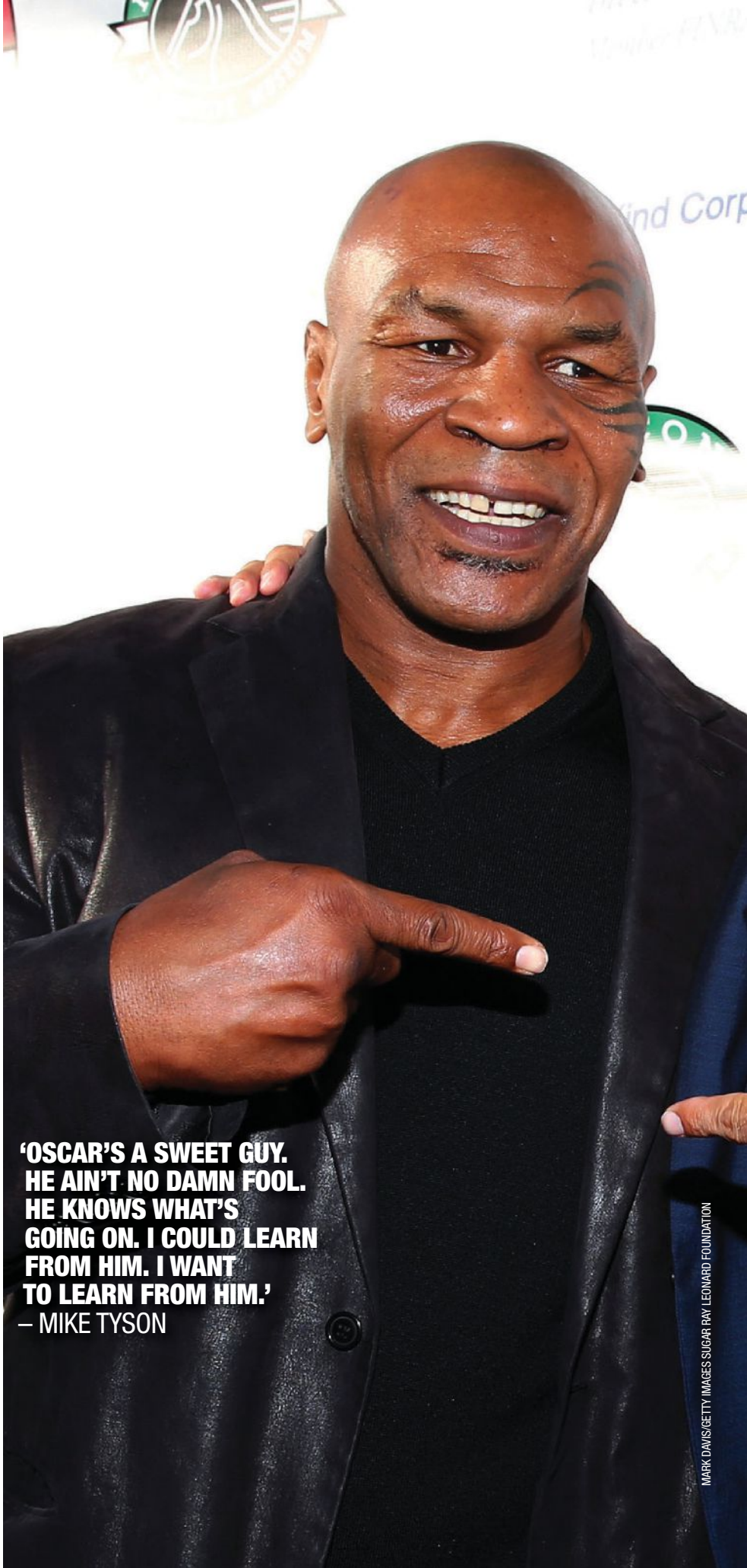
"I learned that fighters should get their money," he said. "Look, I always tell my fighters that you only need two things in this business: You need your trainer and your lawyer. Them and maybe a little water, too."

He has also learned from himself. Tyson was asked to step into a time warp. Imagine Mike, how you, as a new promoter, would deal with the younger version of yourself?

"A guy like me wouldn't listen," he said. "No matter what's said, some guys just don't listen. With some guys, that just makes it tough, real tough. When I was 19, I had the answers. I don't know how a 19-year-old can have all the answers. But I did."

Tyson is probably the last heavyweight champ with worldwide celebrity. Books, a cartoon, and plans for a film are sure signs that the public is still fascinated with him. That enduring celebrity and his stark honesty add up to credibility that the older promoters don't have. Besides, King or Bob Arum or Richard Schaefer never made the long walk from the dressing room, up the steps and through the ropes. They've heard an opening bell. To answer one, however, is altogether different.

Tyson is one of many promoters who have fought or are still fighting. It's a trend and Oscar De La Hoya is its face. The 2014 Hall of Famer is fighting to save his company, Golden Boy Promotions, after the messy resignation of Schaefer as his CEO.



'OSCAR'S A SWEET GUY. HE AIN'T NO DAMN FOOL. HE KNOWS WHAT'S GOING ON. I COULD LEARN FROM HIM. I WANT TO LEARN FROM HIM.'
– MIKE TYSON

MARK DAVIS/GETTY IMAGES SUGAR RAY LEONARD FOUNDATION

Tyson and Oscar De La Hoya are rival – but respectful – promoters.

In mid-August, it still wasn't clear who will still be standing when the smoke clears.

However, De La Hoya has been getting support from several corners, including light heavyweight Bernard Hopkins, who continues to have a stake in Golden Boy. Hopkins has worked on behalf of Golden Boy for cards after Schaefer and other Golden Boy executives walked. He also signed for a November fight against Russian Sergey Kovalev, jumping back to HBO from Showtime in what might be the most anticipated bout during the second half of 2014.

Tyson is among those pulling for De La Hoya, who has resumed a business relationship with Top Rank and is working to end other feuds that have prevented some of the biggest fights from happening.

"Absolutely," said Tyson, who said that he first spoke to De La Hoya about hopes and plans for his own promotional endeavor during his inaugural card on Aug. 23, 2013, in Verona, New York. "Oscar's a sweet guy. He ain't no damn fool. He knows what's going on. I could learn from him. I want to learn from him."

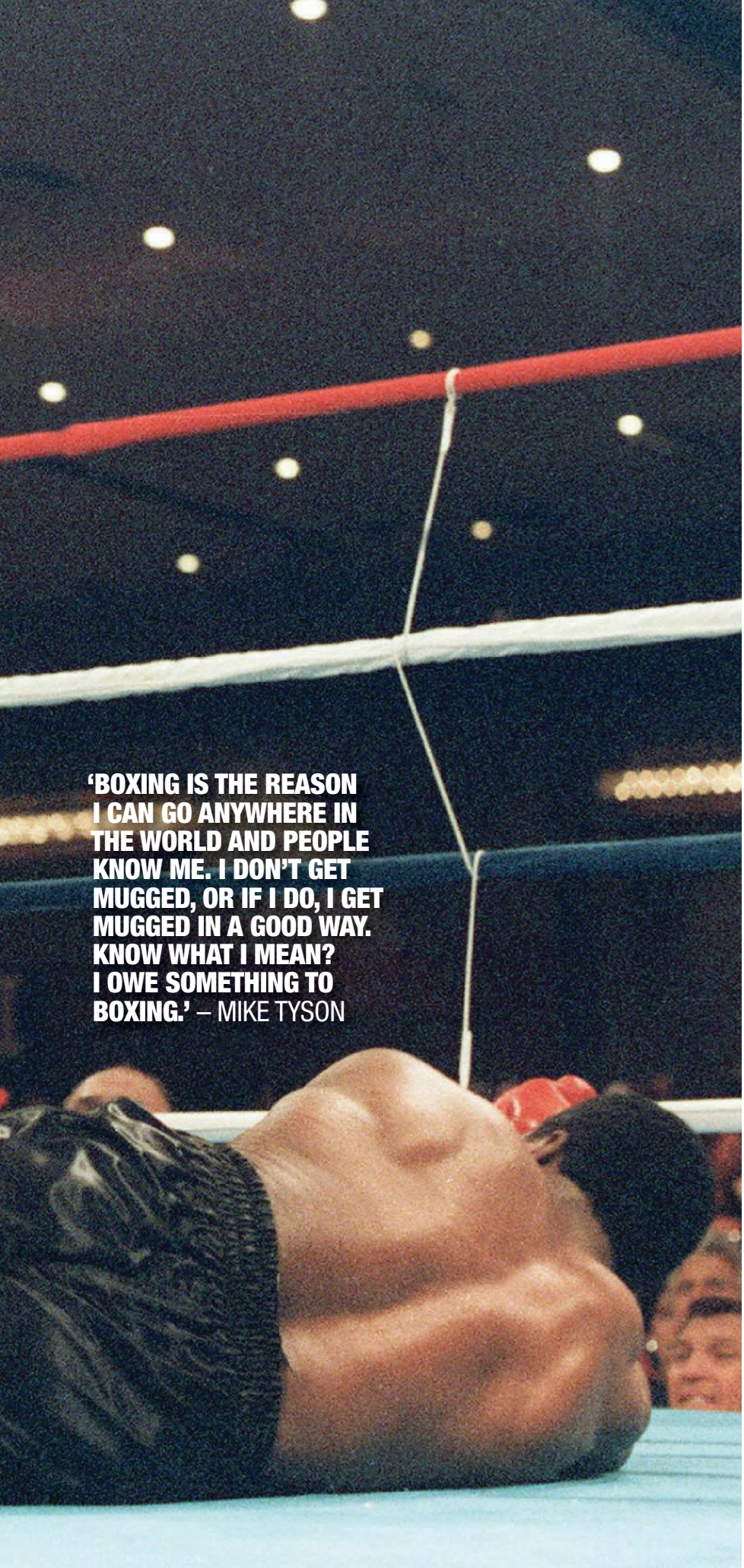
Tyson says he has detected change in the business because of De La Hoya's presence.

Because of De La Hoya, he said, the fighter has more independence and more of a voice in what he hopes to do in his career.

"Oscar has already made a difference in this business," said Tyson, who has ventured outside of Vegas and New York with promotions in Miami and Pittsburgh and has plans for a card in Mesquite, Texas, on Sept. 26 and another one in Oklahoma in October.

Still, Tyson isn't exactly sure why so many fighters want to promote. For him, the evolution from fighter to retired fighter to promoter has

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



‘BOXING IS THE REASON I CAN GO ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD AND PEOPLE KNOW ME. I DON’T GET MUGGED, OR IF I DO, I GET MUGGED IN A GOOD WAY. KNOW WHAT I MEAN? I OWE SOMETHING TO BOXING.’ – MIKE TYSON

Who could’ve imagined Tyson as a promoter when he brutally knocked out Trevor Berbick in 1986 to become the youngest-ever heavyweight champ?

been different. De La Hoya founded Golden Boy while he was active. Mayweather, Miguel Cotto and Canelo Alvarez formed their own companies while still fighting. But Tyson became a promoter about eight years after his last fight, a loss to Kevin McBride in 2005.

“I don’t know the reason,” Tyson said when asked to explain what motivates other fighters to promote. “I really don’t know that reason. My reason is to be there is for my fighters. It’s all about being their father, their mother, their servant. Whatever they need me to be.

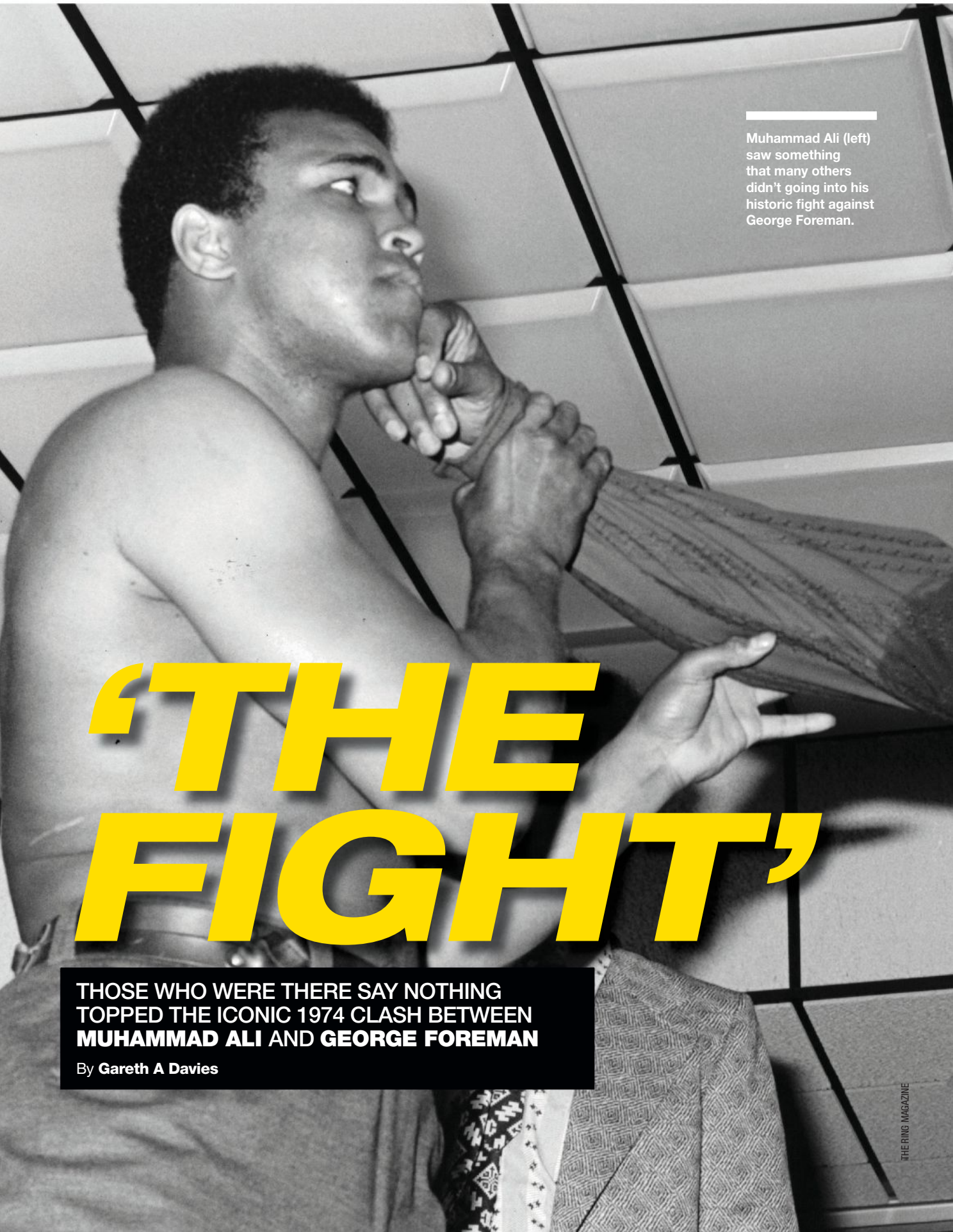
“For them, I’m still a fighter. I’m hands-on. Involved with them. I mean, most promoters don’t give a damn about the fighter. That I know. If their fighter ain’t in the ring, they only care about getting him in the ring. They don’t care if they’re sick or if they got AIDS or if his mother died. Just get his ass in the ring. They don’t care if he gets knocked out.

“It’s just, ‘Gimme my money.’”

In some way, it’s business as usual. If 2014 is an indication, however, business as usual might not be sustainable. Pay-per-view numbers have declined. TV ratings for non-pay-per-view bouts have slipped.

“I’m back in a sport that almost destroyed me because it’s almost destroyed,” Tyson said. “As much as it took from me, it gave me a lot, too. I know that. Boxing is the reason I can go anywhere in the world and people know me. I don’t get mugged, or if I do, I get mugged in a good way. Know what I mean? I owe something to boxing.”

Boxing has a long history of surviving in spite of itself. If it needs some saving, however, it might turn to some somebody who already has saved himself. The unlikely Tyson knows how to survive. That kind of know-how is valuable in any kind of business.



Muhammad Ali (left) saw something that many others didn't going into his historic fight against George Foreman.

'THE FIGHT'

THOSE WHO WERE THERE SAY NOTHING TOPPED THE ICONIC 1974 CLASH BETWEEN **MUHAMMAD ALI** AND **GEORGE FOREMAN**

By **Gareth A Davies**

THE RING MAGAZINE

Why has the heavyweight title bout between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman – "The Rumble in the Jungle" – become not just one of the great boxing events but one of the most iconic sports events in history?

Was it the perfect storm of two black heavyweights, in a golden era for the big men, duking it out in Africa?

Was it the bizarre backdrop in a country with one of the cruelest tyrants in history in Mobutu Sese Seko casting a threatening shadow over the event?

Was it due to the emergence of the shock-haired Don King, the brooding, giant heavyweight form of George Foreman or just the fact Muhammad Ali became the second heavyweight in history to regain the championship?

Did the Academy Award-winning documentary movie "When We Were Kings," released 22 years after the fight, bathe the event in a golden light for the next generation?

Forty years on, Foreman himself, his public relations man Bill Caplan, promoter Don King, British sportswriters Alan Hubbard and Colin Hart, now in their 70s, and Leon Gast, who directed "When We Were Kings," look back on an incredible happening.

The Kings descended on Kinshasa, Zaire, in early September of 1974. Nobody knew what to expect. Not the two fighters, their respective camps, the eccentric promoter or the traveling circus of media men and women who followed them out there, all of whom were eager to chronicle

whatever happened when George Foreman and Muhammad Ali shared a ring with the world heavyweight title at stake.

"When I went to Africa, all I wanted was to get more money," said Foreman, unbeaten in 34 professional fights at the time. "Don King agreed to pay both Ali and me so much money I didn't care where he got it from. Going to Africa to fight meant they weren't even going to snatch income tax from us. We couldn't say no. That's why I was eager to leave and go to Africa. But I wasn't happy to leave home at all."

"Ali was going to Africa, a neutral spot, but it turned out not to be really a neutral spot," said Gast, director of the 1996 Academy Award-winning documentary "When We Were Kings." "Ali was able to sell himself as the real-deal black man. George wasn't able to do the same."

Caplan, Foreman's PR man, had been with the champion ever since watching him compete in his seventh amateur fight, a three-rounder, which he lost. "I flew into Zaire with George," he said. "It was quite a long trip from California. We occupied the whole first-class of the jump jet and it was a [Zairean] crew and they were very accommodating. They left the door open to the cockpit for the entire flight and invited us to come up into the pilot's cabin whenever we wanted."

By Caplan's estimations, there were 20 members of Team Foreman on board the plane that day. Foreman had five sparring partners, his doctor, his trainers – Dick Sadler, Sandy Saddler and Archie Moore – and many others in the entourage. Not only that, when the plane finally touched down Foreman and the rest were greeted by 6,000 people waiting on the tarmac at sunrise for him to arrive. "Ali got an even bigger greeting, of course," said Caplan. "He got in one day before we did."

For those who followed Ali and Foreman, the lure of Kinshasa was simply too strong to resist. "I didn't even know where Kinshasa was when Don King announced the fight at the Foreman-Ken Norton fight in Caracas six months earlier," said Colin Hart, who has been writing on boxing for The Sun newspaper since the late-1960s. "But, with King, it was a case of not 'if', but 'when.' I thought it would happen, but it seemed strange. There was no money for the fight. That was when King went to Hemdale Films in London to help finance it."

King maintains it was his greatest achievement as a promoter. "What is most remarkable about the whole deal was that I had a feeling the time had come," he said. "It was about black liberation, about freedom of the mind, self-confidence and pride because what we were doing was actually against all the odds, against all the racists who were espousing that black people could not rise to the occasion.

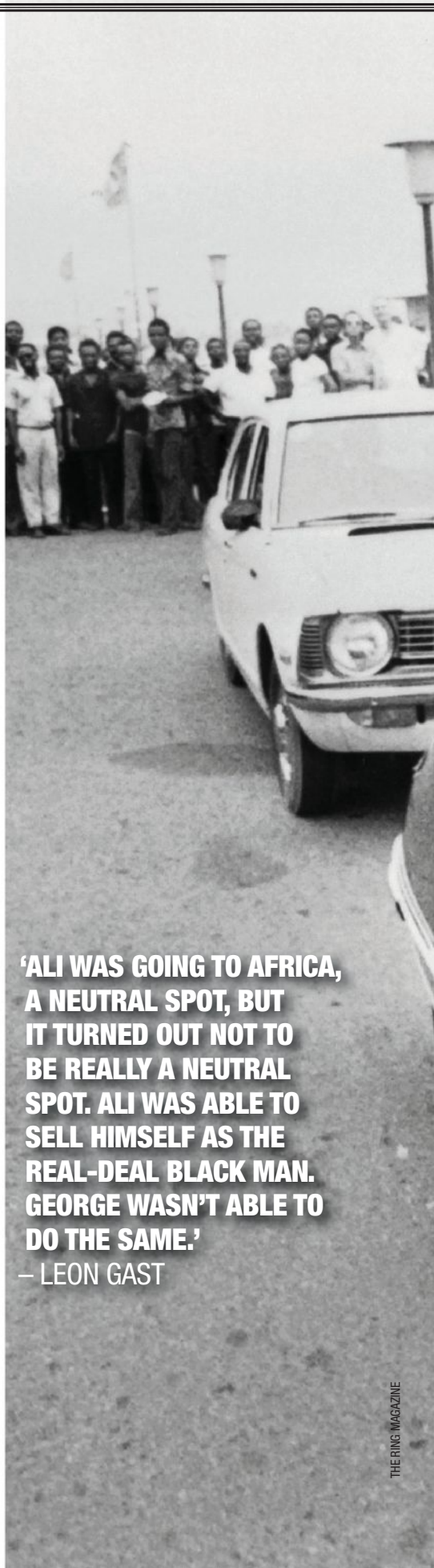
"Yet here we had two black fighters, fighting for the world heavyweight title, staged on the dark continent, promoted for the first time by a black promoter. This sporting event had a whole new dimension about it."

A poster at the 20th of May Stadium in Kinshasa depicted Ali and Foreman in the foreground, with African slaves in chains behind them. "From slaveship to championship," read the slogan. And King, with his electric-shock hair, appeared in the left-hand corner of the poster.

However, the promoter's name did not appear on the fight contracts, nor was any of the money used to stage the fight raised by King, then a partner in a company called Video Techniques. Nevertheless, the fight was scheduled to take place on Sept. 25.

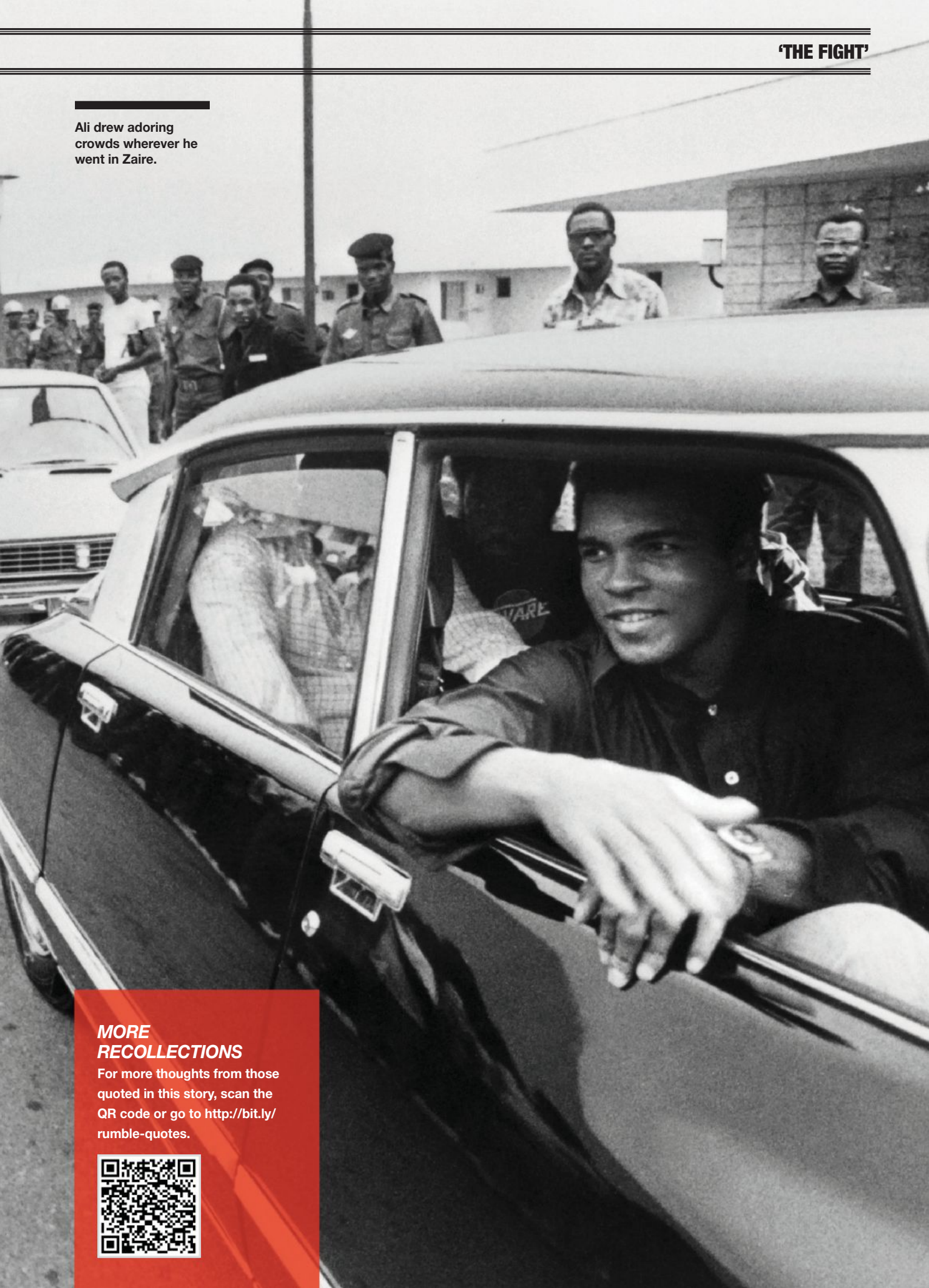
Then, five days before the fight, disaster struck. Bill McMurray, the California heavyweight champion, threw up his elbows in sparring and sliced open Foreman's eyelid. "The Rumble in the Jungle" was off.

"We were staging a musical festival with James Brown, B.B. King, The Pointer Sisters, Bill Withers and a lot



'ALI WAS GOING TO AFRICA, A NEUTRAL SPOT, BUT IT TURNED OUT NOT TO BE REALLY A NEUTRAL SPOT. ALI WAS ABLE TO SELL HIMSELF AS THE REAL-DEAL BLACK MAN. GEORGE WASN'T ABLE TO DO THE SAME.'
– LEON GAST

THE RING MAGAZINE



Ali drew adoring crowds wherever he went in Zaire.

MORE RECOLLECTIONS

For more thoughts from those quoted in this story, scan the QR code or go to http://bit.ly/rumble-quotes.

of other great acts," said Gast. "But the fight was postponed before the musicians had even come over. A lot of them had no idea the fight had been canceled. Part of the deal that all of them made was that not only would they get a fee, but they'd also get ringside seats to the fight."

Gast went home to put the finishing touches his documentary "The Grateful Dead," only to return when the fight was rescheduled. Others were less fortunate. Foreman, for example, had to stick around for another six weeks. He had no choice in the matter.

"George wanted to leave the country," said Caplan. "He didn't like it there. President Mobutu wouldn't allow him to leave, though. George just wanted to get out of there. Mobutu feared he would never come back, and he probably wouldn't have."

Caplan attempted to cheer up the champion by playing table tennis with him. Typically, Caplan would come out on top, much to his opponent's annoyance, but it was, for a short while, the only kind of training Foreman was able to do.

The fight was eventually given a new date of Oct. 29 and those who left Kinshasa prepared themselves to return. It was, of course, always going to take place. Having signed Ali on the promise of $5 million, with Foreman receiving an equal payment, King faced the prospect of appeasing the leader of Zaire. Mobutu saw the event as the opportunity to put his country on the map and had come up with a promoter's purse.

He wasn't a man to be trifled with.

"We were taken on a tour of the stadium before the fight," said Hart, "and there were bullet holes in the walls." They were told Mobutu had had known criminals shot before the arrival of the visitors. It was a message. It let it be known that criminal behavior would not be tolerated while the eyes of the world were on his land.

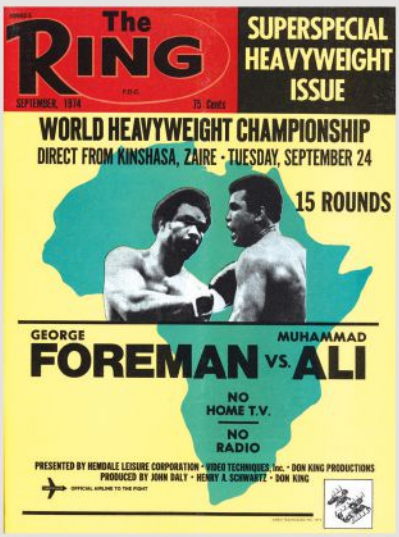
"Kinshasa was a hotbed of crime," said The Independent's Hubbard. "These were the days before mobile phones and the Internet, so we were reliant on telex (teleprinters). There was a pressroom we used to type out our copy on the old typewriters. We'd then hand it to an operator who would telex it to the office. But copy went missing. When this was relayed to the press officer, a remarkable gentleman named something like Tim Poo Poo Wah – who wore the most amazing hats – he somehow got to president Mobutu's office and learned that the next telex officer who fell asleep on the job would be shot."

The date of the fight changed but little else had in Foreman's mind. He still expected to crush Ali in next to no time.

"I was indifferent to it all," he said. "I just thought, I'm bigger, better and you're no threat to me. I didn't dislike him, though. He never got under my skin. I was too big to let him get under my skin. He could only get under someone's skin if they thought he was going to be a threat. I never did."

The champion's confidence rubbed off on all those around him. "I was a betting man in those days and I bet money on George," said Caplan. "I laid down 3-to-1 odds [in favor of Foreman] and it would have been 10-to-1 except he was fighting Muhammad Ali. Because Muhammad Ali was so loved and because he was the most famous person on Earth, the odds were 3½-

'GEORGE WANTED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. HE DIDN'T LIKE IT THERE. PRESIDENT MOBUTU WOULDN'T ALLOW HIM TO LEAVE, THOUGH. GEORGE JUST WANTED TO GET OUT OF THERE. MOBUTU FEARED HE WOULD NEVER COME BACK, AND HE PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE.'
– BILL CAPLAN



RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

MUHAMMAD ALI VS. GEORGE FOREMAN

When: Oct. 30, 1974 (Oct. 29 in the U.S.)

Where: 20th of May Stadium, Kinshasa, Zaire (now Congo), Africa

Attendance: Estimated 60,000

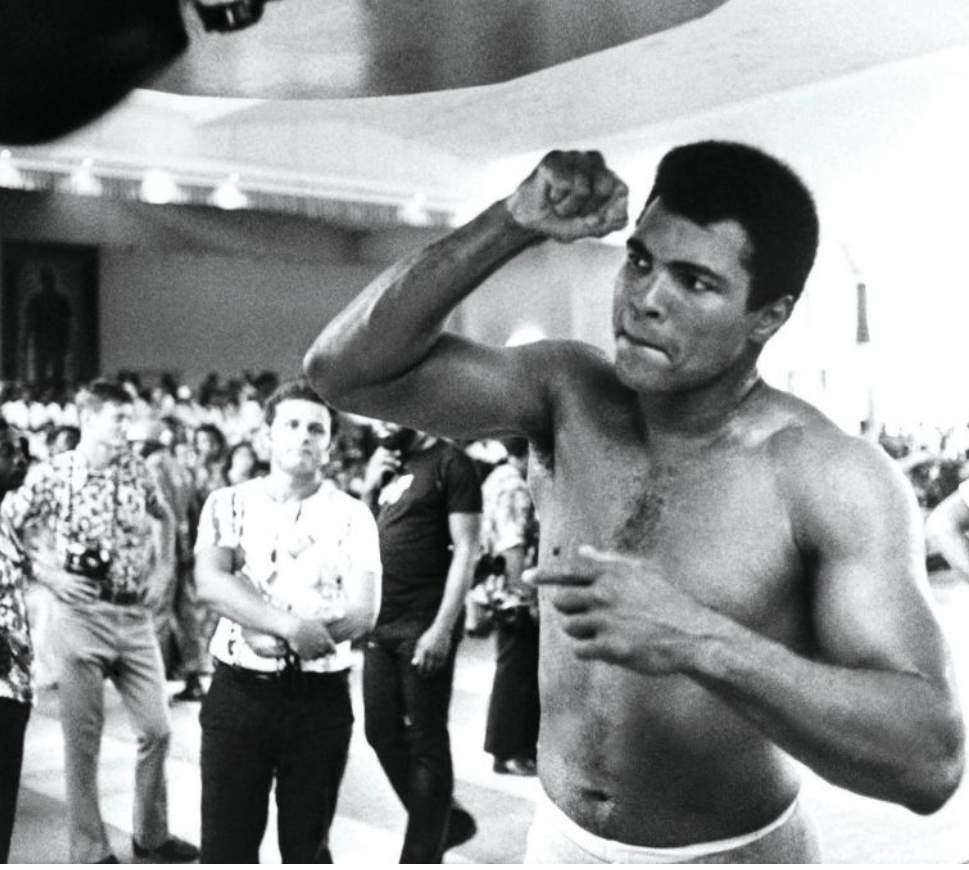
At stake: Foreman's heavyweight championship

Records: Foreman (34-0, 31 KOs); Ali (44-2, 30 KOs)

Heights / weights: Foreman (6-3 / 220); Ali (6-3 / 216½)

Promoter: Don King (with Hemdale Film Corporation and Video Techniques Inc.)

Backdrop: Don King, overseeing his first major promotion, was able to pay Foreman and Ali the $5 million each he promised them when Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko agreed to subsidize and host the fight. The event was scheduled for Sept. 24 but was pushed back to Oct. 30 after Foreman suffered a cut in training. Ali used his rope-a-dope tactic to wear out Foreman and won by an eighth-round knockout, thus regaining the title that was stripped from him in 1967 when he refused to enter the U.S. armed services.



Ali was fit physically and mentally for the task at hand as "The Fight" approached.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

to-1. If it was anyone else, it would have been 10-to-1. George had destroyed everyone else."

"George's reputation was thuggish back then," said Gast. "He tried to live up to it. I had heard at a press conference one of the journalists ask him a question and he said, 'I'll answer that if you come outside and ask me that.' I mean, he was challenging journalists to go outside with him! He really was a different kind of character. But, deep down, he was a nice guy."

Like a dark, dirty secret, Foreman fought to contain his good, amiable nature for years. It made sense to him to do so. After all, having spent time alongside Sonny Liston, he had learned from the brooding best.

"Sonny Liston was my role model," he said. "I spent many years working with Sonny, training and preparing for fights. What I started to admire about him was his personality. Or, I should say, his absence of a personality. If he wanted to be rude, he'd be rude. He was nice to me, of course, but I figured if that's what it takes to be heavyweight champion of the world, that's what I was going to do. I admired Sonny Liston and I also got rid of my personality."

So downbeat was Foreman during this time, he even refused to speak to Caplan, one of the men closest to him, for a number of weeks. Only their daily ritual of ping-pong battles brought them together.

Ali, of course, was quite the opposite. "Ali was the most famous person on Earth," said Caplan. "He could literally go into any country in the world, walk out on to the street and draw an immediate crowd. He was bigger than the president of the United States, the prime minister of England and the Pope. None of them could do that without their entourage. … [Ali] did it in Zaire and had people following him by the hundreds. Everywhere they followed him they were chanting, 'Ali bomaye! Ali bomaye! (Ali, kill him!)' That would make anybody feel uncomfortable and George was no different."

The longer they spent in Zaire, the more the challenger grew comfortable and the more the champion missed home. "Had they fought when they were first meant to fight, it could have had a different outcome," said Gast. "But, being that it was delayed nearly 30 days, Ali was able to take advantage of it. Whenever there was a crowd, he'd say this was his country and that they were his people. It was one of the greatest psych jobs ever in boxing. George was there the whole time, but he was there on the outside. Ali was there on the inside."

As a result of these vastly contrasting moods, forecasts on the fight began to change.

"We'd never seen anyone so big as Foreman, but I tipped Ali to win," said Hart. "I had a gut feeling Ali would do it. The mind games, 'Ali bomaye,' getting the people on his side, the fact the fight was postponed. But the big thing for me was that Greg Peralta had created problems for Foreman [in 1971]. Peralta was a built-up light heavyweight, but George was dead on his stool after nine rounds against Peralta and didn't want to come out. They had to force him to go out for the 10th round. He was too big. It was a sign for me that Ali could do it."

Gast was late to the party. "Initially, I didn't think Ali had a chance," he said. "But after spending time with him and seeing George – seeing him work with bad sparring partners – I changed my mind. I saw Ali's confidence and felt his belief. He said he had God on his side."

Even Caplan, Foreman's trusted aide, began to have doubts as the days whittled away.

"Let me tell you what his disadvantage was," he said. "George did not take stitches in that bad cut he suffered. He hated needles. So he made them do it with butterfly bandages. And because of that, in that six week period, his sparring partners were not allowed to hit him above the chest. That was to his detriment."

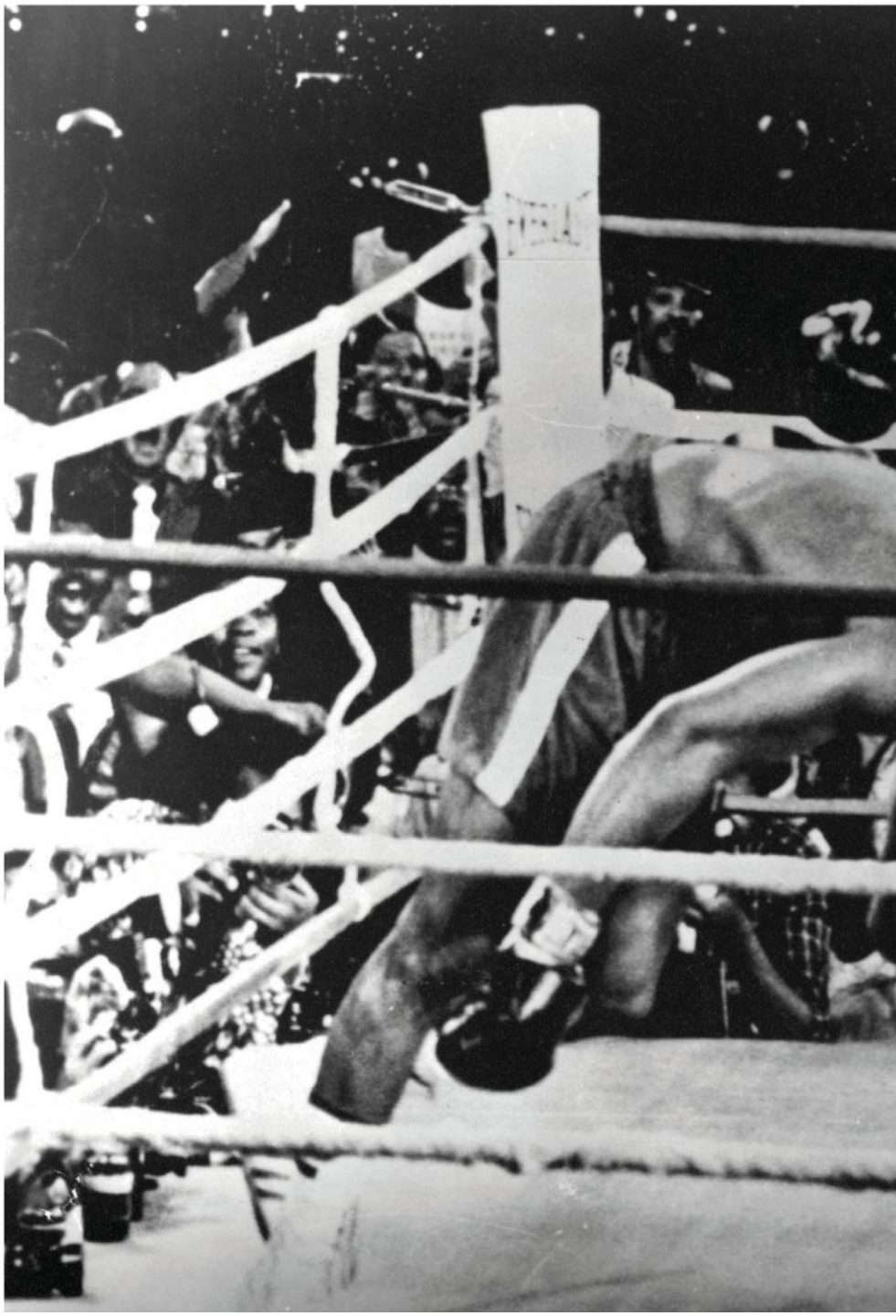
"The Fight," as the great Norman Mailer so simply and eloquently coined it, took place in the early

morning hours of Oct. 30 – to accommodate U.S. TV – in front of 80,000 Africans at the 20th of May Stadium. It began with Foreman stalking Ali and walking through a series of right hand leads.

"Now we're in the fight and George whales on Ali in the first and second rounds," said Caplan, picking up the action. "Ali is lying back on those very loose ropes, doing the rope-a-dope and he's taking punishment. At the end of the second round, though, I've got my ample belly up against the ring and I see George sucking in wind, breathing hard. I said to the photographer next to me, 'Oh my God, we're going to blow this fight.'"

Gast couldn't believe what he was seeing, either. "Nobody had heard the term rope-a-dope at that stage," he said, "but it became the catchphrase for the fight. When Ali went to the ropes and leaned back, Foreman whaled away at him. He landed not only on Ali's arms and shoulders, but he also landed the same punches he used to knock out Joe Frazier and Ken Norton. He landed his Sunday punch several times. Ali never went down."

Instead, Ali let Foreman punch himself out and then delivered the coup de grace in the eighth round, a knockout triggered by a picture-perfect right hand thrown with his back to the ropes.



'I HAD THIS AIR OF SUPERIORITY ABOUT ME BACK THEN. I JUST COULDN'T LOSE. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO LOSE. BUT THAT NIGHT SOMETHING STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS HAPPENED TO ME. I LOST, OF COURSE, BUT I JUST COULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT. THE PUNCHES THAT I HAD RELIED ON FOR SO MANY YEARS WOULD LAND BUT DO NOTHING. I THOUGHT IT WAS KIND OF MYSTERIOUS.'
— GEORGE FOREMAN

"I had this air of superiority about me back then," said Foreman. "I just couldn't lose. I didn't know how to lose. But that night something strange and mysterious happened to me. I lost, of course, but I just couldn't understand it. The punches that I had relied on for so many years would land but do nothing. I thought it was kind of mysterious."

"Being there," said Gast, "I always thought it was just a matter of time before he took Ali out. But, after four or five rounds, Foreman wore himself out. It was as if he had hit Ali with his best punches, realized he wouldn't buckle, and then thought, 'Now what am I going to do?'"

Ali patiently waited for his opportunity against Foreman and then pounced.

AFP/GETTY IMAGES

After the upset came the rain.

"A tropical storm came down almost as soon as Foreman had been counted out," said Hubbard. "I've never seen rain like it. I remember driving back and the roads had become rivers with little kids on either side splashing about dancing and shouting 'Ali bomaye.'"

For the beaten champion, it never stopped raining. "George was very depressed afterwards," said Caplan. "I got up in the ring, walked to the corner, patted him on the back and said, 'George, don't worry about it. It's not the end of the world. All the great fighters lose.' And they do. Sugar Ray Robinson lost 19 fights in his career. Joe Louis lost fights. All the greats did. Rocky Marciano was the only exception."

"I left there trying to find answers," said Foreman. "There had to be more to life than just one, two, three and you're out. That fight started me on my journey looking for big answers. Because of that fight, I found big answers, too."

Each of the men involved consider the event their Everest. "I spent five days with The Grateful Dead, I traveled with the Fania All-Stars and the Hells Angels, and I went to Folsom Prison," said Gast. "But 'The Rumble in the Jungle' topped them all. I didn't realize what it was we were getting, but it was so exciting."

"I started writing about sport when I was 18 and I'm 76 now," said Hubbard. "And, after covering 12 Olympic Games and several football World Cups, 'The Rumble in the Jungle' remains the most epic and memorable event lodged in my consciousness."

Even Caplan, whose bet backfired and whose friend lost the fight, remembers it fondly. "I've worked hundreds of fights since 1963 and it's at the top of my list," he said. "Even though my guy lost, and I lost, it was the greatest adventure of my career."

And then there's Big George. To the initial dismay of Caplan, the former world heavyweight champion now has a screensaver on his computer which depicts the moment he was famously knocked down and out by Ali in 1974. But it's there for a reason.

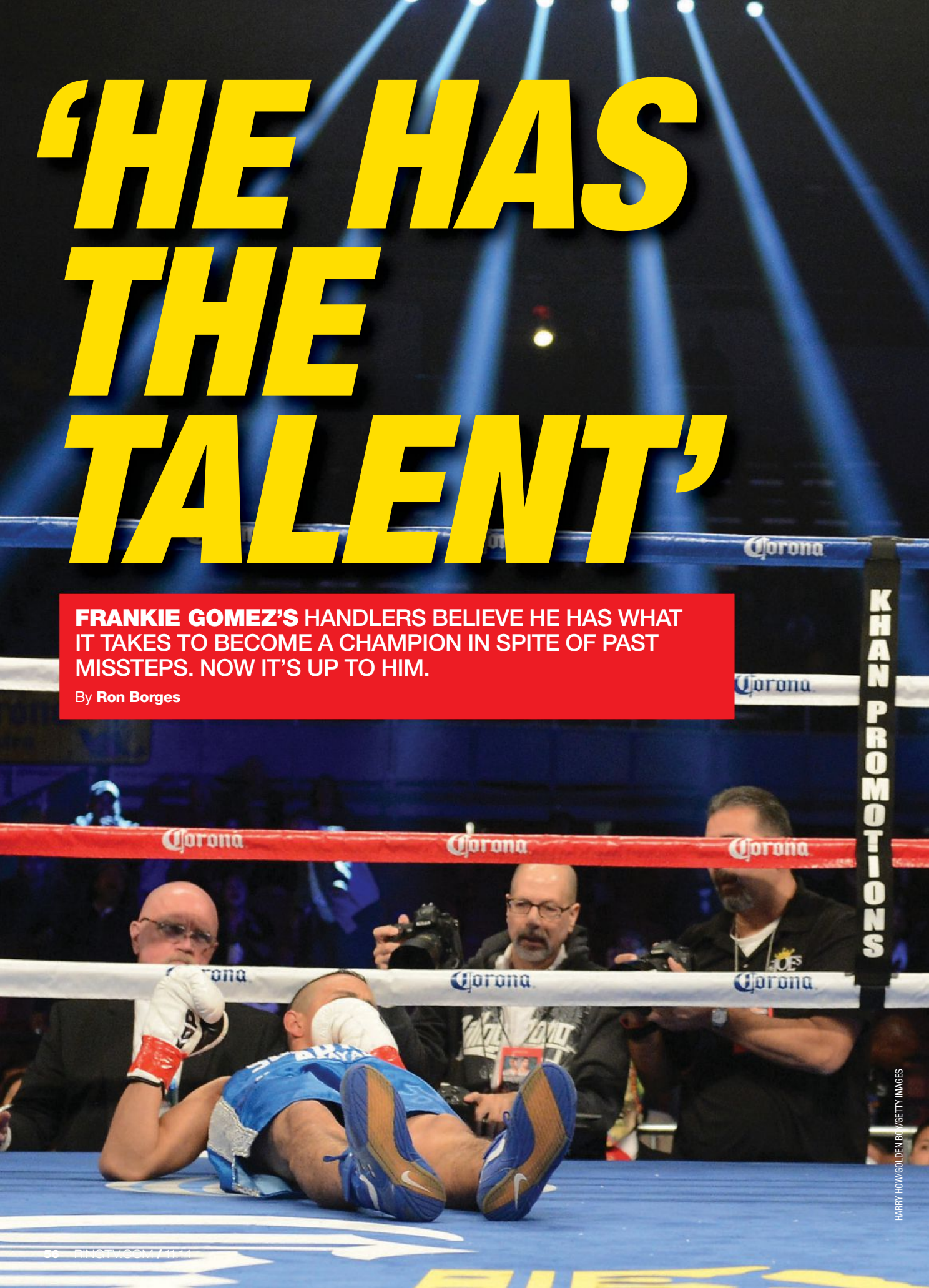
"I realized it was my name and my association with Muhammad Ali and the 'Rumble in the Jungle' that helped me with my ministry," he said 40 years later. "So the one thing I'm really proud of is that boxing match with Muhammad Ali. It was our fight. I'm glad that I was in that event.

"That picture helps me, too. When people say, 'Do you really think you lost?' I can say, 'Well, here's a photograph that proves it!'"

‘HE HAS THE TALENT’

FRANKIE GOMEZ’S HANDLERS BELIEVE HE HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME A CHAMPION IN SPITE OF PAST MISSTEPS. NOW IT’S UP TO HIM.

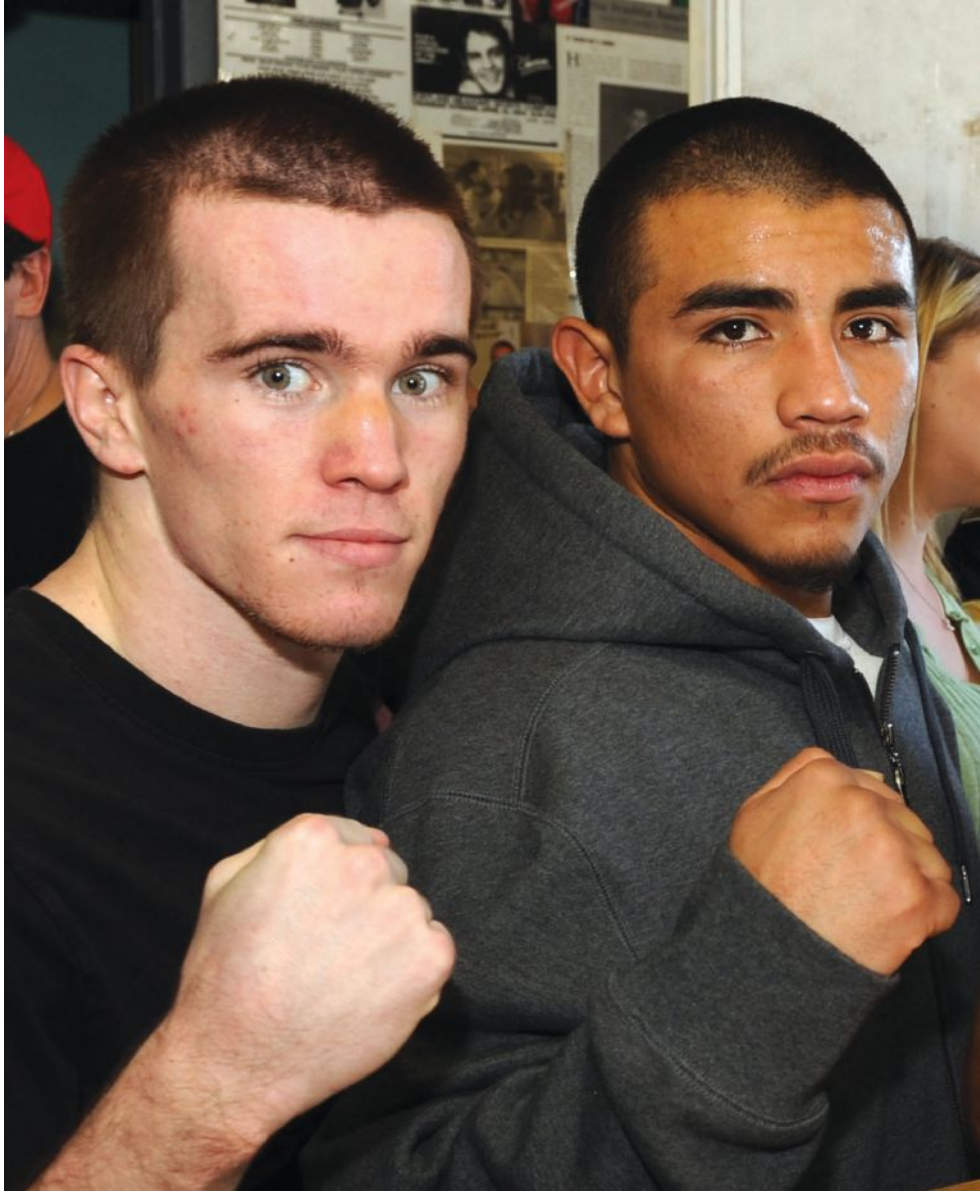
By **Ron Borges**



HARRY HOW/GOLDEN BOY/GETTY IMAGES

When Frankie Gomez hit a rough patch in his career several years ago only one person inside Golden Boy Promotions seemed to really understand its roots. The Fighter understood.

The Fighter didn't like Gomez's irregular training habits or lackluster performances against opponents who were supposed to be little more than a short night's work, beginning with Luis Alfredo Lugo in the eighth fight of his career. He didn't like it when Gomez's dwindling work ethic led to regular requests to be moved to higher weight classes when no



such requests should have been necessary for a 19-year-old prospect. He certainly didn't like it when several arrests, including a narcotics possession charge, landed him briefly in the Los Angeles County Jail and led to an 11-month layoff. Didn't like it at all.

When Gomez came back he was exiled to the mountains in Big Bear Lake, California, jettisoning his lifelong trainer, Ronnie Rivota, to work with veteran trainer Abel Sanchez, who also handles middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin. It's a familiar boxing story but it didn't change things much.

Gomez had begun working with Rivota when he was 5 and had his first amateur fight when he was 8. Rivota was in his corner then and he was still there in 2009 when Gomez won a national championship at 17 and a silver medal at the AIBA world championships in Italy, his first (and, as it turned out, only) major international event. He was 120-8 as an amateur the day he turned professional. Still, it wasn't long before Gomez began tuning Rivota out, skipping training sessions and losing the commitment he and his manager, a lifelong L.A. cop named Hector Ibarra, had always seen in him.

Rivota has been quoted saying, "The money just got in the way," and former Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer would agree. So would The Fighter, who didn't like the problems he was seeing any more than anyone else inside the company that reportedly paid Gomez a $350,000 signing bonus and guaranteed him a monthly stipend 3½ years ago. Those figures ended a bidding war with Bob Arum's Top Rank Promotions and convinced Gomez to forego the Olympic Games, a decision driven by economics – his own and his family's. Yet they also seemed to cause more problems than they solved.

Truth be told, The Fighter should have liked what happened after that check was written less than the others, because it was his money, but Oscar De La Hoya understood better than the rest what Gomez was trying to deal with.

Boxing is a sport that has broken as many hearts as Las Vegas. It is the hurt business outside the ring as well as inside it, facts De La Hoya knows as only an ex-fighter can. On many levels it is a cruel sport and on all levels a cruel business that has little time for talented young men who decide training is a sometimes thing. The sport is littered with such people who couldn't stay on course, such as a good-looking Mexican kid a few years back named Francisco "Panchito" Bojado. Frankie Gomez probably had no idea who that was but De La Hoya did and that's the point he tried to make when he sat Gomez down to reassure him of one thing while warning him of another.

Bojado was an 18-year-old teenager with nothing but promise when he first turned professional in 2001. He won nine straight fights by KO, sparred with De La Hoya and was massively hyped as boxing's next big thing. He first had the Duvas behind him and later Golden Boy yet he turned fat and satisfied, training sporadically and believing his own hype. He was outpointed by Juan Carlos Rubio in his 10th fight. That didn't change his training habits and soon he was beaten again and then a third time. His career ended in 2007 with a record of 18-3. He was 24 years old.

De La Hoya didn't want the 22-year-old Gomez to become another Bojado, a casualty of youthful mistakes and promise

MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Frankie Gomez (second from left) seems to be perpetually intense, even with (left to right) pals Jamie Kavanagh, Amir Khan and Victor Ortiz.

unfulfilled. So after the people closest to Gomez had been scolded by De La Hoya's associates, The Fighter stepped in.

"I told him I never stopped believing in him," De La Hoya said. "It was important for him to hear that because it's so easy for people to turn their back on someone who is screwing up. I understood where he was coming from. I grew up in the same neighborhood in East L.A. Fame for me was at a grander scale but our experience was similar. He went from having nothing to having a lot of money.

"You're a kid out of your comfort zone having to deal with your buddies hanging around, your family. Getting tugged right and left. You have to deal with all that pressure. It takes a lot of courage to tell your friends you can't do this or that, to say no to your family. I told him fear [of the lifestyle changes prizefighting demands] can keep him from accomplishing all he could.

"I believed fear deep inside was part of what was causing him to act the way he was. 'How do I say no to my family? How do I tell my friends?' Change is difficult. I think he got it. I see a sparkle in his eyes now that I didn't see before."

Boxing demands lonely self-denial. It brutally exposes your shortcomings, whether physical or emotional, if you fail to meet that demand. Whether Gomez succeeds remains to be seen but changes have been made. Ibarra remains but Rivota and Sanchez have been replaced by six-time Boxing Writers Association of America Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach, who now tends to Gomez at his Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood.

Gomez has won six times under Roach, his latest a 10-round decision over respected journeyman Vernon Paris in July. That night Gomez dropped Paris in the fourth round and pitched a shutout against someone who, though idle for 14 months, had only lost previously to Zab Judah. Now Gomez (18-0, 13 KO) stands on the threshold, according to Roach and De La Hoya's matchmaker, Eric Gomez, a fight or two from challenging for the junior welterweight title and allegedly no longer someone fighting himself as well as his opponents.

"He's the best prospect in my gym," Roach said. "I didn't know him before he came in here but I knew who he was. He was the only guy (Jose) Benavidez couldn't beat as an amateur. His manager is a

police officer. He brought him here. I'd heard all the stories. I told him, 'The first day he misses is the last day he's here,' but I wanted to give him a fair shake and he's been very respectful from Day 1. It's hard to get a smile out of him but he knows how to fight. He has a mean streak in him that comes out in fights. I like that. I love his style.

"He lives in one of the rougher neighborhoods in L.A. I've talked to him about maybe moving somewhere safer but he just says, 'This is what I like.' When he fights you know there'll be a lot of action. He's a crowd-pleaser."

Whatever training habits, or lack of them, surfaced in the past, according to Roach they have not manifested themselves at Wild Card. There he's found Gomez "more interested in training than getting into trouble. I think Frankie is the real deal." Roach should know, if anyone can.

He has guided Manny Pacquiao to most of his success and has a gym brimming with talented champions of the past, present and future. He runs a difficult workplace where the challenges are many and the excuses few. It is a place Gomez came to grow ... and maybe to grow up.

"At Wild Card they got punchers, boxers, you get to face everybody," Gomez said. "I helped Manny for the Marquez fight. That was amazing. I couldn't believe he was in front of me. I felt blessed. I've changed a little bit. When I turned pro I was just a kid. I just wanted to get the headgear off and put on those small gloves and see what that was like. My first fight you could feel your knuckles right on the guy's head. I wasn't thinking about my future. The things I've been through showed me I had to stay focused because if you don't you're the only one losing out. When fight night comes, everybody else will see it."

Boyle Heights, a heavily Hispanic working-class neighborhood east of downtown Los Angeles, is where Gomez began fighting, both in the streets and the gym. The latter was where he also seemed to find himself, or at least the part of him the world would notice. What they saw was raw fury and gifted fists.

"When I was small I used to fight a lot," Gomez said. "I had a lot of energy so my father and my brother took me to the gym. I was too small to train at first so I watched. I fell in love with it. I never wanted to stop. I got my boxing license when I was 7 but I had to train a whole year before I could have an amateur fight. At first guys would get the best of me. I wanted to get those guys back. When I'm in there I want to see who's going to come out on top. I been doing this all my life. I like beating up on people."

That's good because it's the path Gomez has chosen, but to be a successful prizefighter you must beat up on people without beating yourself. You must understand that where you came from is not necessarily where you should remain.

Most of all, you need to come to grips with boxing's harshest reality: There are more Panchito Bojados than Golden Boys and talent was not always the determining factor. In the end, Gomez will determine which he is. And pitfalls lurk everywhere, both inside the ring and outside the ropes that encircle it. If nothing else, he seems to have grown to understand that talent untended will lead him nowhere but back to East L.A. and the fate of guys like Bojado. Many questions about him remain unanswered but there is one he hopes is never asked: "Whatever happened to Frankie Gomez?"

"Growing up, the guy I liked most was De La Hoya," Gomez said. "Him and Mike Tyson and (Julio Cesar) Chavez. It feels good to be fighting for Oscar De La Hoya. He is Golden Boy."

True enough, but now he's also

FRANKIE GOMEZ

THE ESSENTIALS

AGE: 22

HOMETOWN: EAST LOS ANGELES

HEIGHT: 5 FEET 8 INCHES

DIVISION: JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

STANCE: ORTHODOX

NICKNAME: PITBULL

PROMOTIONAL COMPANY: GOLDEN BOY

TRAINER: FREDDIE ROACH

PRO RECORD: 18-0 (13 KNOCKOUTS)

AMATEUR RECORD: 120-8 (WON SILVER MEDAL AT 2009 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS)

STYLE: BOXER-PUNCHER

Will we look back on Gomez's career and ask "what if?" or celebrate his success?

Gomez's employer to a great extent. De La Hoya believes in his promise but understands its fulfillment will come down to Gomez alone because that is where boxers always stand or fall – alone.

Roach knows this too but sees in Gomez the same things others did before the great bidding war that nearly brought him down. He sees a fighter whose ceiling is higher than his understanding.

"He's explosive on the mitts," Roach said. "He's a great puncher. He needs a little more experience but he's not far away. I think he's a better prospect than Zou Shiming (the two-time Olympic gold medalist who turned pro at 32 and is 5-0 under Roach and approaching an IBF flyweight eliminator match in November). I think he'd knock out (former junior welterweight champion) Amir Khan. He's too much for him."

Khan left Roach after four years to begin working with Virgil Hunter, who also trains Andre Ward. Only Gomez would like to see such a match more than Roach, so perhaps a collision course will determine his future. Like the trouble or promise that may lurk around every corner, The Fighter believes it is a future that can go either way.

"He's close," De La Hoya said. "I believe by this time next year he'll be a world champion and ready to challenge anyone at 140 or 147. As his promoter, I'd like to see him step up in competition one more time. Paris was supposed to give him trouble because he moved on him. He handled that well. We're giving him an opportunity to write his own story the way I did. He can rewrite his story if he wants to. We'll get him the opportunity. He has the talent. The rest is up to him."

MANNY PACQUIAO

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

CANELO ALVAREZ

BUNCHES

STARS REVEAL THEIR FAVORITE COMBINATION PUNCHES AND WHAT MAKES THEM WORK »

By **Gordon Marino**

CANELO: JOSH HEDGES/GETTY IMAGES; KLITSCHKO: JOHN MACDOUGALL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES; PACQUIAO: DAVID BECKER/GETTY IMAGES

PUNCHES IN BUNCHES

Everyone agrees that combinations are the key to unlocking success in boxing. Even the Picassos of the knockout blow, like Mike Tyson, have always sought to throw punches in bunches; when they failed, their gloved game quickly went south. What, then, is the secret to combination punching and what are some of the favorite combos of our fistic artists?

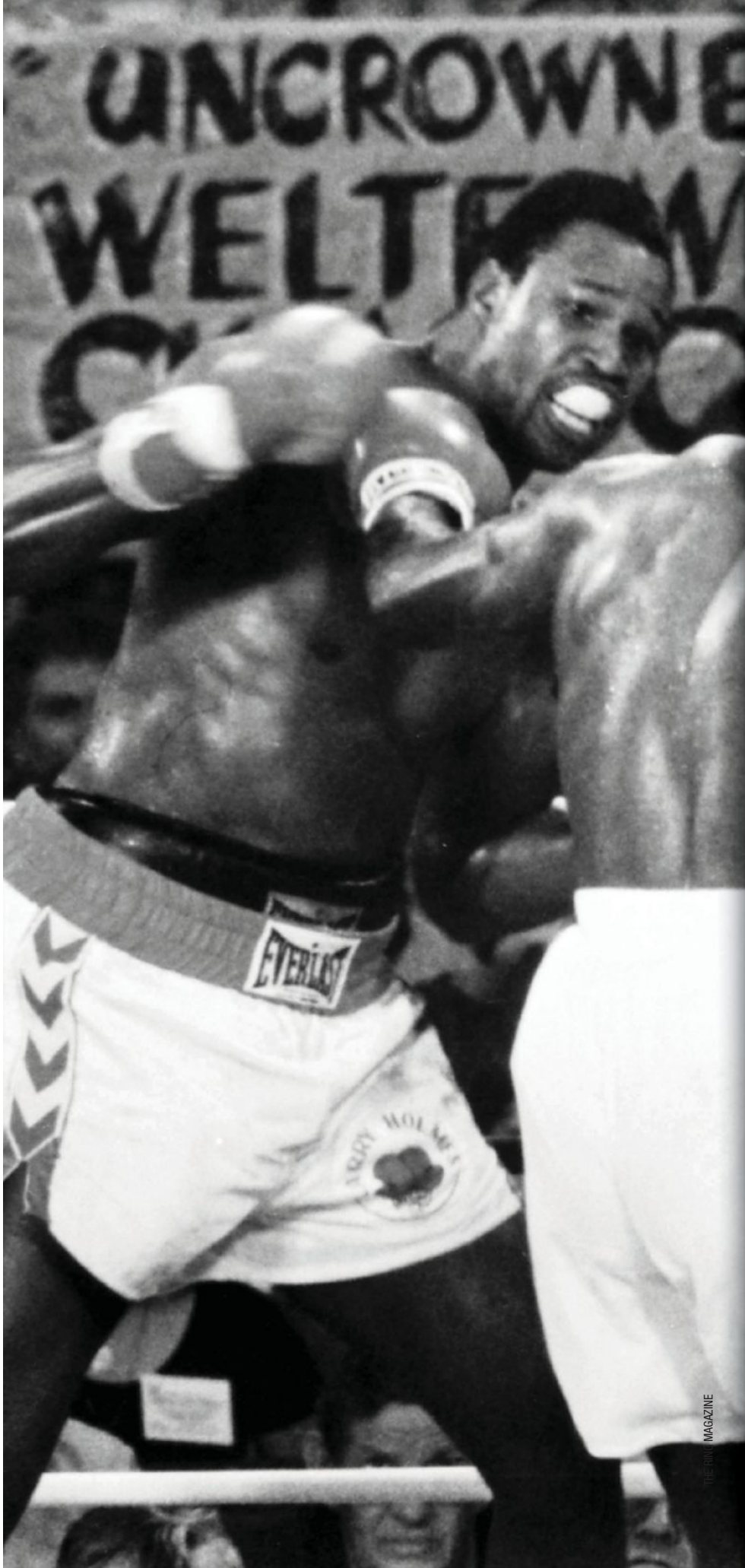
A boxer who can launch a combination, slide or pivot to get an angle and ignite another series of blows is a very good bet to have his or her hand raised at the end of the night. At his best, no one is better at firing consecutive combinations than Manny Pacquiao.

I recently cornered the Pacman and pleaded with him for one nugget of boxing wisdom. The always gracious Manny immediately said, "Teach your amateurs from the beginning that when they are shadow boxing or hitting the bag to throw six- and seven-punch combinations because when they get in the ring in a real bout those seven punches will become two or three."

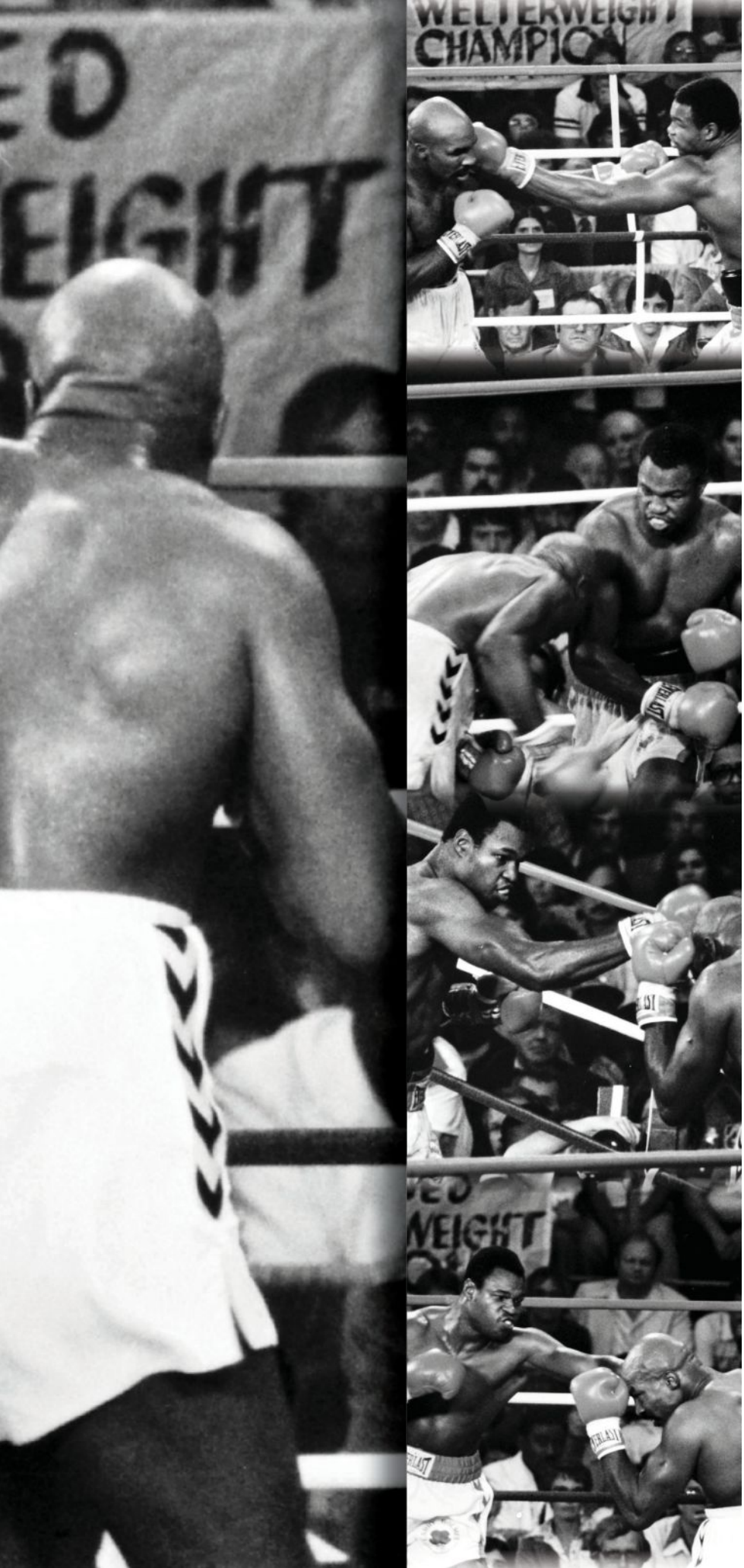
Keeping your balance is a key to combination punching. You can't pitch forward and you have to avoid smothering your ability to punch by getting in too close. Floyd Mayweather Jr. can dial in double left hooks or a series of straight rights and still keep his weight over center. Joe Louis was a paragon of balance in the ring. One of his premier combos was a right to the body, left hook and then another right to the head.

Keeping your equilibrium as you are letting your hands go requires core strength – which is to say a lot of abdominal and back work. It always involves staying calm and disciplined enough to remain in punching position.

Angelo Dundee once told me that one of the combinations that he used



THE RING MAGAZINE



to try to put on the hard drive of his fighters was, "a jab, right hand, quick shoulder feint with the hook, and then back with another straight right." He added, "Then slide six inches to the right, and bang, bang, bang again." Dundee reasoned that everyone is always expecting the ABC of boxing – jab, right hand, left hook – so the double right comes as a surprise package right down the middle.

The Hall of Fame trainer always stressed keeping a comfortable bend in the knees. If your legs stiffen and come together as you punch, you can forget about pulling the trigger on a combination.

When pressed about his combo of choice, Mike Tyson revealed, "I liked to throw a hard jab to the solar plexus few times. The counter to that is the right hand. So then I would feint the jab, get the other guy coming in and trying to counter, and then, bam, come up with all the power in my legs with a right and left hook."

However, the Tyson series that sent most of his opponents into a nosedive developed like this: Iron Mike would get in close, switch to an almost southpaw stance, throw a right hook to the body, followed by a right uppercut. Tyson chuckled, "Cus (D'Amato) used to tell me that the right did not have to be hard, just enough to open the guy up, down the middle, but I used to throw both punches viciously." If that were not enough, Tyson would dip under anything incoming and shift his weight to the left and fire away with a double left hook.

Wladimir Klitschko, the second-longest reigning champion in heavyweight history, volunteered, "At this point in my career, my hands have their own language. It is as though they think for themselves. I

Larry Holmes' favorite combination was "down the middle, jab, right hand, jab, right hand."

don't plan combinations. But the key is to be like a magician, to distract your opponent's attention, get him looking for a punch in the wrong place, and then surprise him with the punch that he is not expecting."

Klitschko is, of course, famous for hypnotizing his foes with a Liston-like jab, sometimes turning it over into a hook and so moving his opponent's head into his power hand, and then exploding with one of the most concussive straight rights in the bruising business.

Larry Holmes, along with frontrunner Joe Louis, is the only heavyweight with more consecutive title defenses than Dr. Steelhammer. A zen master of boxing technique, Holmes said, "My favorite combination was down the middle, jab, right hand, jab, right hand. I liked this one because it did not leave me open."

Holmes, who sparred countless rounds with Muhammad Ali, said, "Ali used the same combination, except he would end it with a slapping left hook. … The left hook is a dangerous punch because you are always open when you throw it. Ali was vulnerable to it. That's why I never started with a left hook. I had to get it set up first. When I went to the body, it was always with a jab first."

Mickey Ward boasted a famous two-punch combo, which, of course was punctuated with his notorious left hook to the body. He agreed with Holmes that starting off leaning in with a hook to the body can be dangerous to one's health. He told me, "I would wait a few rounds and see if that body shot was opening up. Then I would get in close and be pretty square. I would tap to the head, not too hard, just enough to get his right hand moving up, and then sink the hook to the body."

A few days before he officially became a boxing immortal, Hall of Famer Oscar De La Hoya said, "My favorite combination was a jab to the head, then go to the body with a right uppercut, left uppercut, right uppercut, followed by a left hook to the head." The Golden Boy gleefully added, "That was the combination that I used to knock out Vargas." Like many of his boxing brethren, De La Hoya is an advocate of moving your punches up and down – in this case head, body, head.

In a recent conversation, De La Hoya protege Canelo Alvarez expressed the same conviction about changing levels. He said, "My favorite combination is a jab to the

JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES. (FINAL)
MIKE NELSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

head, left hook to the body, left hook to the head, then go out with the jab."

One of Paulie Malignaggi's favorite fistic rhythms begins with a one-two to the head followed by a left uppercut and then a powerful left hook. Like Klitschko, The Magic Man is a big believer in the art of deception. "The idea," said Malignaggi, "is to get the guy's hands moving towards the middle, and opening up the outside for the hook."

Malignaggi also likes jab-jab-right hand, because with the double jab you get momentum going forward for the big bopper.

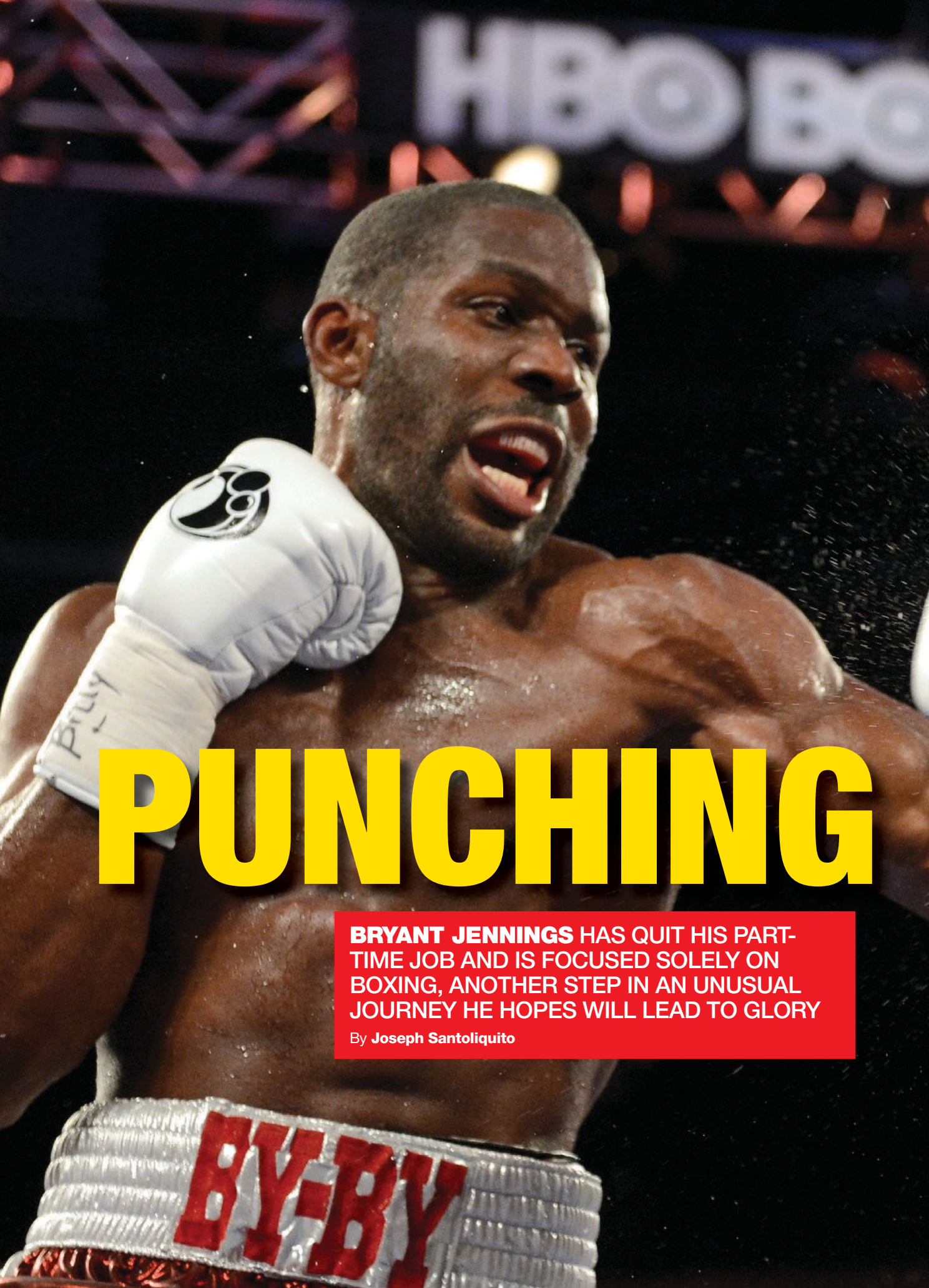
In his unique craft of destruction, Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini was anything but a trickster. Mancini was a Godzilla of will who applied relentless pressure. He recalled, "I liked to tap, tap, tap, close the gap, slip inside on the jab and then blast a hard right to the ribs, followed by a left hook to the body and then a hook to the head." Like Canelo and most of boxing's grandmasters, Mancini believes in finishing every combination with a jab. He recalled, "My great trainer Murphy Griffin always made me finish with the jab because it stops the guy from countering and it also gets you back in position."

Of course, if you are in a lefty vs. righty situation, the angles are different and so are the prospects for punch combinations. Johnathon Banks, the chief understudy of Emanuel Steward, suggested, "When you are righty in with a lefty, you might want to put a little more weight on your lead left foot." He added, "Once you close the distance, throw a right-hand lead followed by a jab and then go out to your left."

The under and over, the left hook to the body and right to the head, is also a good prescription for dealing with a southpaw – and in reverse works for a lefty against a righty.

On the defensive side of the ball, you have to be wary of squaring up when you are coming in with your hands flying, because there are boxers who have a marrow-deep understanding of the fact that the best defense against a busy opponent is to punch when he or she is punching. If you don't believe me on this point, rewind to the sixth round of Pacquiao vs Marquez IV.

Oscar De La Hoya liked to "jab to the head, then go to the body with a right uppercut, left uppercut, right uppercut, followed by a left hook to the head."



PUNCHING

BRYANT JENNINGS HAS QUIT HIS PART-TIME JOB AND IS FOCUSED SOLELY ON BOXING, ANOTHER STEP IN AN UNUSUAL JOURNEY HE HOPES WILL LEAD TO GLORY

By **Joseph Santoliquito**

OUT

Bryant Jennings barely got past Mike Perez (right), evidence that the Philadelphian has much more room to grow.

ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

Bryant Jennings just shakes his head, wondering how he managed to do it. The Philadelphia heavyweight would trudge from his overnight shift as a maintenance worker to the gym for a few hours of training to keep his budding boxing career alive, go home for a meal and about five hours of sleep and then repeat the process again, five days a week.

That's not exactly the blueprint Jennings envisioned in his bid to become world heavyweight champion.

Then again, Jennings' journey has been anything but conventional. He started playing football later than most kids yet went on to become an all-city defensive end his senior year at Ben Franklin High School. He'd never driven a forklift before either, though he mastered that by observing enough to get a license without taking a class.

Then there's boxing. He didn't start that until the ripe old age of 24, considered ancient for anyone who holds world-championship aspirations. Six years later, even though he has been a part-time pro, Jennings finds himself among the few American heavyweights in position to challenge heavyweight king Wladimir Klitschko.

As of Aug. 22, the part-time status changed. That was Jennings' last day working for the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, which allowed him time off to train the last few years. Jennings did everything there – operating a forklift, general building maintenance, fixing holes in the floor, repairing leaky pipes and more.

It mirrors his boxing career, learning on the go.

"At the end of the day, we got the job done and we didn't panic when we came across a problem," Jennings said about working at the bank. "I had no formal training at anything. I just watched and learned. I think I do a good job when it comes to translating things."

Jennings, who turns 30 on Sept. 25, is used to building patiently.

That formula worked well when he juggled work and boxing. The hope now is that complete focus on the sport will allow him to take the next step in his goal of toppling the Klitschkos, Deontay Wilders, Bermane Stivernes and Tyson Furys of the world.

Can he?

"I love the hustle Bryant Jennings shows, and you saw that in his fight against (Mike) Perez," said HBO analyst and future Hall of Famer Roy Jones. "That was a big win for Jennings, and he used his work ethic to overcome Perez's experience. There are some small technical things that Bryant needs to work on, like sitting more on his punches. He's a big guy that needs to develop his power. He just has to get more experience, and in time he might be able to be competitive with someone like Klitschko."

Jennings said he learned a great deal in his 12-round decision over Perez in July, a very close fight that could've gone either way. First, he found out he could go 12 rounds, which he did for the first time. He also discovered he can alter a game plan in mid-fight. Jennings expected Perez to come to him, which didn't happen.

"I have to start faster," Jennings said. "That's been a problem I've had. I'm still learning. At least I came out with the win. I was satisfied with that. But I'm a perfectionist; I wasn't perfect. And I was waiting for Perez to attack. I thought he was going to stand and trade, but he boxed more than I expected. That threw me off. I never watched any tape of him, but I adjusted. I will take the correct steps next time, like watching more tape and knowing more about my opponents before I get into the ring with them."

Some perceive Jennings as just another in a long line of American heavyweights who started in team sports (usually football), went only so far and then picked up boxing late. They generally show promise but ultimately falter for lack of experience and/or size (think Seth Mitchell, the former Michigan State linebacker who fizzled out).

Others believe there is more to Jennings than that.

"Jennings has gone farther than those kinds of heavyweights in this country, I believe," said HBO color analyst Max Kellerman. "First off, he's a remarkable athlete to accomplish as much as he has in such a short time in boxing. To beat a guy like Mike Perez is amazing. But his lack of experience and size (he's 6-foot-3, around 225) considering Wladimir Klitschko's size, are two things

ELSA/GETTY IMAGES

Jennings has had his hand raised in each of his 19 pro fights.

HEAVYWEIGHT TRADITION

Philadelphia has produced some good heavyweights – and some not-so-good ones. Where will Bryant Jennings end up? Here are six heavyweights with strong ties to Philly.

GOOD

Joe Frazier: The Hall of Famer, who handed Muhammad Ali his first defeat, is considered one of the best heavyweights ever.

Tim Witherspoon: Witherspoon fought in a relatively weak era but was deemed capable and held world titles twice.

Jimmy Young: Young had a solid career – including a victory over George Foreman – during the 1970s, the division's strongest era.

NOT SO GOOD

Tyrell Biggs: Biggs won a gold medal at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles but was a flop in the professional ranks.

Randall "Tex" Cobb: Cobb was a decent fighter with a granite chin but is remembered more as one of boxing's great characters.

Marvis Frazier: Talk about pressure? Frazier had some ability but never came close to living up to his father's standards.

going against him."

Kellerman feels Jennings can make progress. He's a live opponent against any of the other top heavyweights, Kellerman believes. He's just not yet Klitschko-ready.

In the meantime, HBO is willing to measure Jennings' progress as he fights on the network. The Perez fight wasn't the most aesthetically pleasing. Still, HBO Sports President Ken Hershman has tagged Jennings with the "tremendous potential" label.

"Jennings is a never-quit kind of fighter, who I think has a bright future," Hershman said. "Bryant's last fight against Perez was a tough style fight for him; he learned a lot. Our goal is to bring him back. The timing of that, I don't know, but we're going to work with his team and try to figure something out. You have to be patient. I think Bryant showed against Perez that he was doing better and better as the fight wore on. He was learning right before our eyes."

And Jennings will continue to cram, although don't expect that to be on a much more accelerated pace. The victory over Perez was supposed to set up a fight against the Stiverne-Wilder winner. When that fight was rescheduled for later in 2014, it also put Jennings' plans on hold.

"Bryant has had 37 fights in less than five years (18 amateur fights and 19 pro fights) and he beat [Perez] who had over 440 fights," said Fred Jenkins, Jennings' trainer. "Bryant is running at 75 percent right now, and who knows what that other 25 percent will add to what he needs to do. As he goes, he'll get better. We saw that in the Perez fight. There is still a lot of room for improvement. We just need to stay busy. If it was up to me, I would like Bryant to fight every four weeks."

So would Jennings.

He keeps saying no one has seen him at his best because he's never been able to fully commit to boxing before. And that's fine. He has more time to prove what he's made of.

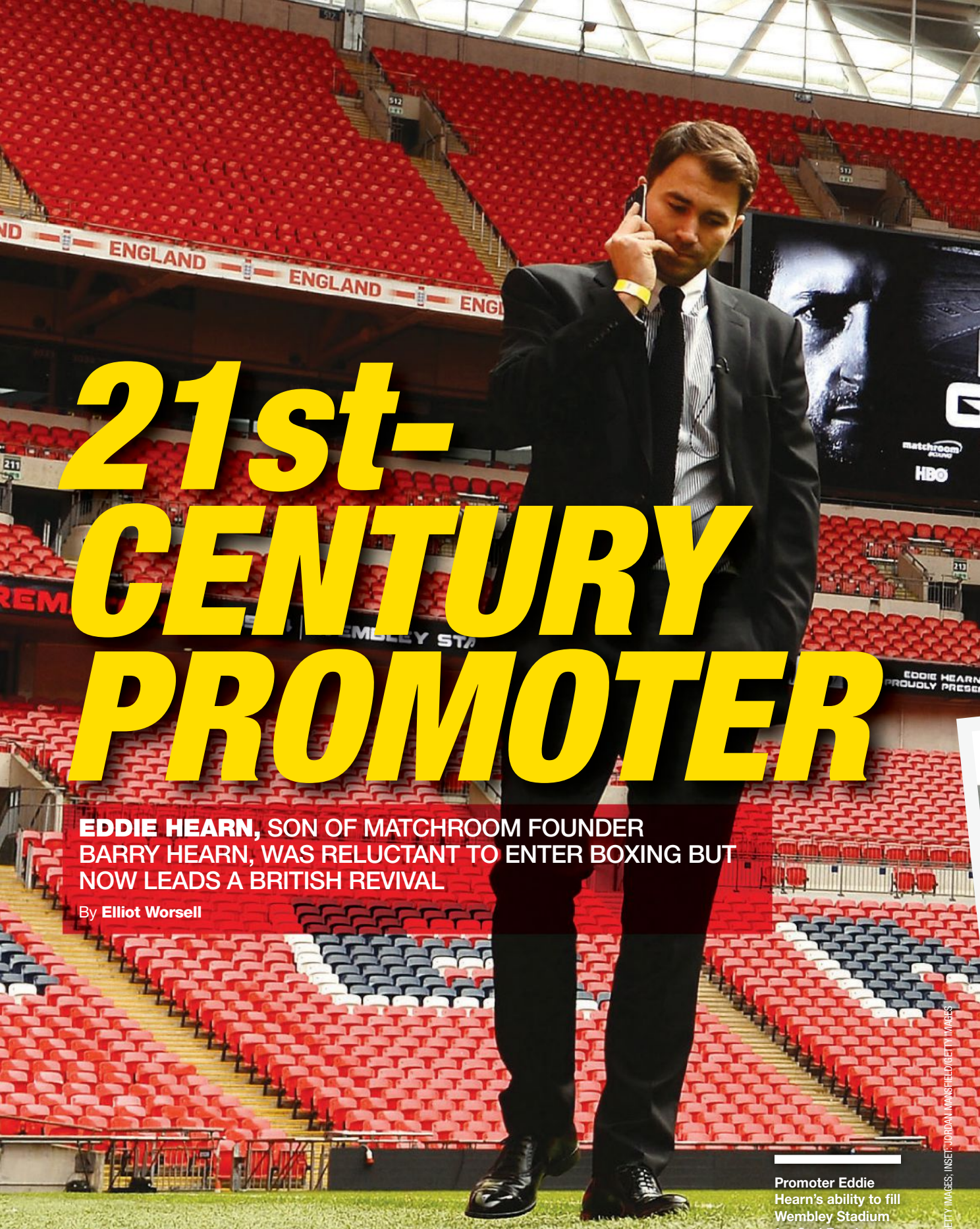
"I came up the hard way on the streets, with my dad in and out of jail, but I came up learning to appreciate everything I had, too," Jennings said. "I grew up around people that were either shot dead or that wound up in jail. That wasn't going to happen to me. I was going to find a way out. I've always had a job. Now boxing is my job.

"I think I had to go through those early hard times in my career when you're dead tired and the last thing you want to do is go to the gym after working eight hours. I got there, though. And it's led to this. It's all on me and what else I can do with it." RING

21st-CENTURY PROMOTER

EDDIE HEARN, SON OF MATCHROOM FOUNDER BARRY HEARN, WAS RELUCTANT TO ENTER BOXING BUT NOW LEADS A BRITISH REVIVAL

By **Elliot Worsell**



Promoter Eddie Hearn's ability to fill Wembley Stadium for Carl Froch-George Groves was a major accomplishment.

MIKE HEWITT/GETTY IMAGES; INSET: JORDAN MANSFIELD/GETTY IMAGES

On the phone and out of sight, he sounded every bit the 21st-century promoter. In rapid, excitable Essex drawl, there was talk of dates, opponents and tickets. He lamented those who refused to face his man. There was even mention of the next fight and the one after that. Forward-thinking, mind racing, it was easy to picture bout agreements strewn across his desk and a calculator in his free hand.

But then, as he hung up the phone, stepped out of his office and came into view, Eddie Hearn, the man at the epicenter of a British boxing boom, appeared as though he'd just rolled off a sun lounger in a Spanish resort. Hair was unkempt yet somehow perfectly in place, an uncertain quiff at its front, while a warm summer's afternoon called for navy shorts, v-neck T-shirt and a pair of flip-flops on his feet. There was no need to play dress up, you see, for the boxing promoter was simply working from home. And, like anyone who works from home, the protocol and etiquette that goes hand-in-hand with an office job often falls by the wayside in favor of something a little more comfortable.

Not only that, when the opportunity arises he also likes to leave his spot in the main Matchroom Boxing office and saunter on through to the room usually inhabited by his father, Barry, the founder and chairman of the company and a man who, luckily for his son, happened to be absent that Friday afternoon. The desk was therefore empty, his seat cold. Thus, Eddie shimmied on through, asked for a coffee to be brought to him and then clasped his hands together and leaned forward. He was at home. No, really, he was.

Hearn handles many of the best fighters in the U.K., including James DeGale.

JORDAN MANSFIELD/GETTY IMAGES

The extravagant Georgian House in eastern England that acts as the headquarters for Matchroom Sports and all its businesses – boxing, snooker and darts to name a few – was bought by Barry Hearn in 1971 and young Eddie had spent much of his childhood exploring its rooms, quarters and hundreds of acres of land. And while he might now only use the premises for work, still the residential-agricultural estate carries fond memories and allows the promoter, who has since taken over the boxing reins from Barry, to relax and find comfort in familiarity.

"Boxing can be like a disease," he said, sounding older than his 34 years. "It can grab you, pull you in and take over your life. There's a lot of hard work, time away and late-night phone calls. But although it's a job, it still doesn't feel like a job, which is a great feeling. When you're in a job that feels like that, you're always going to perform well and enjoy it."

It was easy to see why he might be enjoying life at the moment. After all, in May he promoted the IBF world super middleweight title rematch between Carl Froch and George Groves, a fight staged before 80,000 rabid fans at Wembley Stadium. It was, frankly, the greatest boxing event Britain had ever seen, complete with light show, flamethrowers, a double-decker bus and a stunning, one-punch knockout finish. The night, for Hearn and Matchroom at least, couldn't have gone any better.

"People would tweet me to say it was the best night of their life and then send me pictures of their seats, which were so high up they could barely see a thing," said Hearn, who has embraced and capitalized on the perks of social media better than any other British promoter. "That makes me feel unbelievable. It's not just about the fighters, it's about the show and the fans. It's about people leaving with a smile on their face. Because that's when they'll come back. Wembley was something unique and we may never seen it again."

Nobody saw it coming. Not even the promoter. In fact, for the first 10 years of his life, Eddie Hearn had little interest in the sport of boxing. His father had yet to get involved with the sport and only his godfather, East End boxing trainer Freddie King, a man who once worked with Chris Eubank, showed any real affinity with the fight game. Often he'd visit the Hearn household with gloves and head-guards and mess around with young Eddie out on the grass. But never once did he aspire to box or watch it. "It was just something kids from the city did," he said. "I had no fighting blood in me."

At 8 years of age, he got his first glimpse into the world of professional boxing when his father staged a heavyweight fight between Frank Bruno and Joe Bugner at Tottenham Football Club's White Hart Lane stadium in London. It was Barry Hearn's first ever boxing promotion, and his son, oblivious to the subtle charms of the sport, sat ringside with his granddad, caring little for any of what he saw.

He attended the private Brentwood School and found enjoyment in so-called "normal sports" such as soccer, rugby and cricket, which he played throughout his teens. Boxing, of course, was never on the curriculum.

And yet, in time, the sport began to imprint itself on the youngster's psyche, and it wasn't long before he'd finish a day at Brentwood School, catch a train to Romford and then, at around 4 o'clock, sit in the local boxing gymnasium for three or four hours. He wouldn't box, he'd just sit and watch the likes of Francis Ampofo, Jim McDonnell, Herbie

Hide, Paul "Silky" Jones and the late Richie Evatt, all of whom were promoted by his father and were, he says, "heroes" to him.

"After every training session, we'd go to Deep Pan Pizza on the corner," he remembered. "Me, Francis Ampofo, Herbie Hide and a couple of others and they'd have an eat-as-much-as-you-can pasta thing. My dad would come and pick me up and I'd go home."

It didn't stop there, either.

"I used to carry all the belts out for the fighters as well," he recalled. "I was in Germany when Johnny Nelson beat Markus Bott and when Chris Eubank fought (Graciano) Rochigianni, and I was with 'Silky' Jones when he fought Damien Denny at the Ulster Hall in Belfast. I was carrying the belt for him and we were getting booed. At 14, it was so exciting."

As the excitement levels began to rise, the lucky mascot was no longer content to just be a voyeur. He wanted to start emulating his heroes. So one day, at 14, Eddie moved from his position in the corner of the gym and began to hit the bag. Then he moved on to pads. Soon he informed his father that he'd like to box. Barry rolled his eyes and shook his head.

"The nearest gym to me was Billericay Boxing Club, so I went down there and loved it," he said. "Being around the kids in the gym felt fun to me. I'd be looking at kids who had shaved heads with lines it their hair. Stuff I'd never seen before. I liked being around different kids."

Ahead of his first amateur bout – against "a total nutcase" – he was announced by the master of ceremonies as "Eddie Hills." An honest mistake, he presumed. He thought nothing of it. But when the exact same thing happened in his second fight in Billericay, Eddie made a point of raising the issue with his father on the way home. "Well, son," said Barry, "I asked them to, because if they know you are my son, they'll try and give you a pasting."

On some level, the aspiring young fighter understood. But the journey of Eddie Hills died soon after. At 16, he realized three bouts would be his limit, and instead focused on getting his A-Levels at Havering College, a state college different from anything he'd ever known. "When I left school, I was horrible, a proper Jack the Lad," he said. "I was borderline slung out. And my college was full of people who didn't want to be there and who were mucking around."

Just in the nick of time, then, he knuckled down and got the required A-Level results needed to either send him off to university or snare a job in sports marketing. He chose the latter. And at each and every job interview he faced the same old question: "Are you really Barry Hearn's son?" That was typically followed by, "OK, so why are you even here?"

For three years he worked for a company called BDS Sports and then he moved to LEA Events and Marketing, the athlete representation firm owned by swimmer Duncan Goodhew, which brought him close to rugby players and golfers. This paved the way for Hearn to start his own golf management business, one which saw him spend time on the PGA Tour in America. "That was great," he said. "One thing we're now really good at is personal relationships with fighters and my background as a sports agent help massively in that respect. I realized the importance of having a relationship with an athlete. You have to be on them 24/7."

After working in the golf world for five years, Eddie came home. He started working for his father and Matchroom. At first, this meant dipping his toes into the burgeoning world of online poker. "We started producing all the televised poker shows around the world," he said, "and that was really successful for the company. Boxing was the opposite. We were doing eight boxing shows a year for Sky and were just about breaking even on every show. It was like, 'Why are we even bothering?' We didn't even have any fighters. We were just using other people's fighters on our Sky dates. But we had Prizefighter about to launch and I wanted to get involved in that because I could see its potential. Then Audley Harrison came along."

Lost souls in search of direction, Hearn and Harrison convened in 2009 at a poker table in Las Vegas. It was ostensibly a ruse, though, for both men would rather have discussed prizefighting.

"You still do boxing at Matchroom, don't you?" pondered Harrison, who, at the time, had just suffered his fourth professional loss.

"Yes," said Hearn. "But I only deal with Prizefighter."

"Well, if you've got anything – a four-rounder, six-rounder, anything, just let me know."

Hearn thought about it for a second. He could envisage Harrison entering and excelling in Prizefighter, an eight-man, one night tournament. Moreover, such was the heavyweight's profile, the move made commercial sense. Excited, he called his father later that night.

"You're on your own, mate," said Barry. "I don't like the geezer. I don't want anything to do with him."

It wasn't the response Eddie hoped for. The dream started to fizzle out before it had even begun. "Audley is everything my old man despises about boxing," explained Hearn. "For a fighter to take control of his career from day one and think they know what they're doing and can make all the right decisions, he hates that. I think that's one of the reasons he left the sport in the first place. He could see where it was going."

Despite the momentary setback, Hearn carried on regardless and met Harrison for lunch the next day. It was then that he outlined a plan for him; win Prizefighter, win a European title off the back of it, and then fight David Haye in a WBA world heavyweight title fight. Harrison, a man known for delusional tendencies, had seemingly met his match. A kindred spirit of sorts.

Twelve months later, the stars aligned. Harrison won Prizefighter, won a European title and, in November 2010, challenged Haye for his world title. Then the luck of poker players ran out. Months of bloated hyperbole couldn't prevent Harrison from being crushed in three rounds. "As I was walking out of the arena," Hearn recalled, "some geezer shouted over the top tier, 'Hearn, you're a f---ing s--t promoter!' After that, I never thought I'd work in boxing again. It was never my intention to anyway."

But the next day his phone started to ring.

"Fighters," he said, "all saying the same thing: 'I've seen what you've done with Audley, could you do it for me?' I explained to all of them that Audley was a one-off and could expertly talk his way into things. It wasn't about me being a great promoter."

Still the phone rang and eventually he relented. First he signed Darren Barker, then Kell Brook and, two weeks after that, he received a call from Carl Froch. Suddenly Matchroom Boxing was on the brink of rebuilding a stable and Eddie Hearn was at the heart of it. In next to no time he'd secured an exclusive contract with Sky Sports, whereby Matchroom Sports would be their sole provider of boxing content to the tune of 20 shows a year. Life was pumped into a wounded animal.

"The ethos has always been the bigger, the better," he said. "A lot of it is about perception. When you turn on the TV you have to see an arena that is full and has a great atmosphere. That's what sells the sport. Matchroom was doing shows before I became a promoter that were absolute garbage. They'd go to Huddersfield Leisure Centre in front of 300 people. I often look back and think, f---ing hell, how bad was that?

"Well, we first took Kell to Hillsborough Leisure Centre, but at least we got 1,300 people in hanging from the rafters. Eventually we got him the Matthew Hatton fight at Sheffield Arena and he did 10,000 tickets and the ratings went through the roof. Sky had gone from an audience of about 80,000 to half a million."

The times had changed. And, if ever in doubt, all Eddie had to do was knock on his father's door and swap tales.

"Back in the day boxing was a slave trade," he said. "The promoters – my own father – were the bosses and the fighters did exactly what they were told. It's different now, though. Now you'll see a big fight where the two fighters have a split of the show. Purses no longer exist on those shows.

"I work for my fighter and my

EDDIE HEARN THROUGH THE YEARS

1987 – At the age of 8, he attended the heavyweight fight between Frank Bruno and Joe Bugner at White Hart Lane, London. It was his father's first ever boxing promotion.

1997 – Joined sports marketing and sponsorship consultants BDS.

1999 – Joined Olympic champion Duncan Goodhew's company, LEA Events and Marketing, in London, representing a number of top athletes.

2000 – Joined Matchroom Sport with responsibility for the newly formed golf management business, representing players on the European and PGA tours.

2005 – Assumed the role of chief executive of the PGA EuroPro Tour and subsequently headed up Matchroom Sport's rapidly expanding poker and online gaming operations.

2008 – Launched "Prizefighter," an eight-man, one-night tournament in which the winning boxer received £32,000 (about $50,000).

2010 – Led Audley Harrison to victory in a European title clash with Michael Sprott and then an ill-fated WBA world heavyweight title fight against David Haye.

2011 – Signed the likes of Carl Froch, Darren Barker and Kell Brook to promotional contracts, thus kickstarting a return to boxing for Matchroom Sport.

2012 – Agreed to a two-year deal to be the principal boxing promoter on Sky Sports.

2013 – Signed a two-year extension to the existing Sky Sports deal.

2014 – Promoted the rematch between Carl Froch and George Groves at Wembley Stadium in front of a record-breaking crowd of 80,000 people.

Hearn celebrated another success, Kell Brook's victory over Shawn Porter.

STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

ultimate aim is to get them the biggest fights possible for the most money possible. If you have that mentality that these boxers are your bosses, you do work harder and you do try to do more. Otherwise you just get lazy on power and don't care as much."

He pointed at a picture of Eubank landing a punch on Nigel Benn.

"When Eubank fought Benn a second time, they were just given a purse," he said. "But now the fighters and their managers know a show's revenue and they feel like they're the main players so they should receive a chunk of what their show generates. And quite right, too. If Froch-Groves 2 was 10 years ago, we, as the promoters, would've made millions. Now we're basically on a percentage. That means there's less risk for a promoter, as they effectively don't own the show, but the ones who benefit most from that kind of agreement are the fighters.

"I'm happier with this model because it's all out in the open. Nobody can moan after the event and say they didn't get enough. You got what was there. We all did. That's quite a nice model because it means everyone's happy. The downside is, if it doesn't all go as well as you thought it would, they turn around and say, 'Is this all?' But, generally, when you're involved in splits like that, it means the show's doing well or is going to do well."

In truth, Froch-Groves II not only did well, but ended up being bigger and better than anybody anticipated. It cracked the post-war attendance record for a British boxing event and was a runaway success on Sky Sports Box Office, too. It also shone the light on Hearn as a major player in the promotional stakes, not just at home but worldwide, and, most crucially of all, provided the mainstream platform Froch had for so long craved and deserved; a platform Hearn had been cleverly cultivating while bringing champions like Lucien Bute and Mikkel Kessler over to the U.K. to fight Froch.

Then, three weeks after Wembley, Hearn headed north to Scotland.

"Just when you think you're on the right track, boxing kicks you in the nuts," he said. "We do the show at Wembley, think we've cracked it, and then go to Glasgow and sales are down 40 percent and Ricky Burns loses. We couldn't have had a worse night. Boxing's a great leveler, though. Nothing can beat the incredible highs, but the lows are devastating.

"The moment I lose the buzz, I know I won't be the promoter I once was. I don't know when the buzz will go, but when it does go, I'll go. Saying that, I can't see any other sport or business that I'll love as much as boxing.

"Some people in this game become stale because they've seen so much. Sometimes I'll walk into a five- or six-thousand-seater arena and won't have the same buzz I did when I had the first big Kell Brook fight. But then you go to Wembley and it's a different feeling altogether.

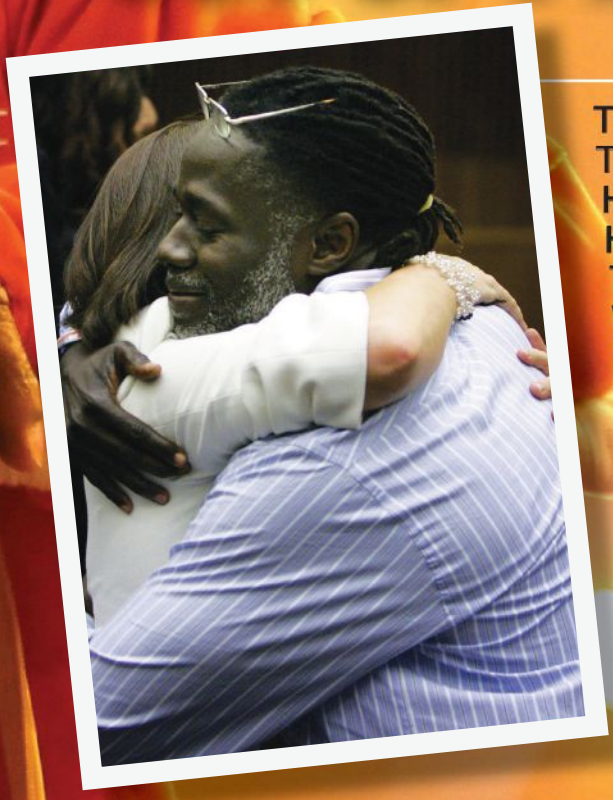
"Then again, how do you top Wembley? Nothing's ever going to top that. Not for the next year at least. That's when you've got to be a professional and a realist and say to yourself, 'Easy now, you can't do something like that every few months.'"

Dress-down Fridays, it seemed, were vital in keeping the working man sane.

Emanuel Steward had many wonderful qualities, compassion being one of them.

CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

THE DAY EMANUEL STEWARD WALKED AN INNOCENT MAN OUT OF PRISON



THE SELFLESS TRAINER WAS AT HIS BEST WHEN HE INTERCEDED TO HELP **WALTER SWIFT**, WHO SPENT 26 YEARS BEHIND BARS FOR A CRIME HE DIDN'T COMMIT.

By **Josh Dubin**

A 21-year-old man named Walter Swift was convicted on Nov. 10, 1982, of a brutal rape and robbery he did not commit. He was headed to prison for 40 years. As Swift was led out of a Detroit courtroom in handcuffs, Emanuel Steward was across town in the steamy bowels of the Kronk Gym, vigilantly circling a lanky boxer named Thomas "The Hitman" Hearns. Emanuel, already an established trainer, was at the outset of becoming boxing's everything man to so many young people fortunate enough to enter his orbit. Trainer, manager, mentor, father figure, you name it. Walter and Emanuel had never met and couldn't be traveling in more opposite directions.

Walter languished for 26 years in some of Michigan's roughest prisons. Many of us have heard triumphant stories about the wrongfully incarcerated. What is not usually publicized, however, is the suffering these people have endured. Gang fights, attempted sexual assaults, stabbings, the paralyzing psychosis brought on by confinement to a dank, narrow space. Suffice it to say Walter experienced it all.

During Walter's incarceration, from 1982 to 2008, Emanuel was building the Kronk boxing program, which churned out cold-blooded champions at an impressive rate. But there was something far more extraordinary going on behind the scenes, something that transcended world title belts.

Emanuel was not just grooming fighters, he was building a dream factory. Kronk was a home away from home for inner-city kids who, by and large, had few role models and bleak futures. It was a fraternity of sorts for those who otherwise might not have had a constructive outlet to channel the raw aggression that is often a byproduct of growing up in hardscrabble Detroit.

JOHN GICHIGI /ALLSPORT

The Kronk fighters adored Steward. He had that extra something that made people want to be around him – a gleam in his eyes, an unobtrusive authority when he gave advice, a genuine warmth, a streak of Detroit hustle. Mike Brudenell, a writer for the Detroit Free Press, put it best just after Emanuel passed in 2012:

"Steward could be hard on his fighters in the ring. He could and did swear a lot – but not in front of women and children. He enjoyed a drink and loved a steak. But he couldn't say no to someone with his hand out. During his days as an elite trainer/manager, Steward dined with billionaires, police officers, crooks and beautiful women. He owned Rolls-Royces. He made plenty and gave plenty away. He was welcomed into the finest establishments in the country."

I met Emanuel in 2003, during the 20th year of Walter's incarceration. I was writing a profile about Lennox Lewis at his final training camp in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania. Upon arriving, I asked several members of the team if they would be willing to sit down for an interview after Lennox's workout. I was told either "later," "maybe" or flat-out "no" by all of them. I did not bother asking Emanuel for an interview. Once the gym was mostly cleared out, I felt a hand on my shoulder and heard the words, "You must be the lawyer Lennox told me about up here to write a story. What's your name, young man?" I turned around but before I could introduce myself he said, "I'm Emanuel. I want to hear about these court cases. Come on up to my cabin tonight. I cook a nice little barbecue, with the ribs and chicken and the nice little corn and everything. What's your name, again?" His words came quick and were laced with laughter. I liked him right away.

That evening, I went to his cabin. He told me about Detroit, the heyday of Motown Records, how he started off working for a telephone company before turning to training full time. He showed me tapes of old fights. We talked about our families, life in general. It felt as if he were a long-lost uncle. Three days later, there was a knock on the door of my cabin. When I opened it, Emanuel was standing there. And there was that smile, that electric smile. He had a beautiful leather Kronk jacket and two Kronk sweatshirts – my name embroidered on all of them. We talked endlessly during the month I spent in the Poconos, eating dinner together almost nightly.

After camp broke and Lewis narrowly defeated Vitali Klitschko, Emanuel and I remained in touch and developed a strong friendship that would last almost a decade. When I began working with the Innocence Project, a non-profit organization that helps exonerate the wrongfully incarcerated, Emanuel was intensely interested. He always asked about the cases. As the years passed, our friendship grew stronger. And Walter, unbeknownst to either of us, continued to waste away in the Michigan prison system.

In August of 2007, I had dinner with Barry Scheck, one of the founders of the Innocence Project. He mentioned that the organization was having a difficult time getting the district attorney's office in Detroit to pay attention to a case. Most exonerations are mired in a dizzying maze of red tape, but this one seemed especially so. "This guy is stone-cold innocent, Josh," Scheck told me. "If I could just get the right people to pay attention, we can get this guy out." Then, almost as if throwing a Hail Mary, he said, "Know anyone big in Detroit?" I immediately thought of Steward.

I had heard stories about how famous Emanuel was in Detroit but I thought, "He's still just a boxing trainer. How much pull could the guy actually have?" I told Barry that I

Steward was a hands-on guy, whether it was holding the mitts (with Naseem Hamed) or getting involved in causes.

knew someone who might be able to help. I explained who Emanuel was and his influence in Detroit. Perhaps detecting my skepticism, Scheck said, "You never know. Worth a shot."

When I got home that evening, I called Emanuel. He whispered, "Hello?" I had obviously woken him up; I didn't realize that he was overseas. I apologized and told him I would call him back the next day, that there was something I wanted to discuss with him regarding how he might be able to help the Innocence Project. I quickly mentioned Walter's case, said goodbye and hung up.

My phone rang about about 10 minutes later. "S--t, I can't go back to sleep thinking that I might be able to do something to help this man. Tell me about it, Josh." It was 3:47 a.m. where he was.

I told him what I knew about Walter's case and Emanuel began to list everyone he knew – DAs, judges, politicians. We arranged a conference call for later that week with Scheck and a staff attorney at the Innocence Project, during which they described their frustrations in getting the right people to pay attention. They sent him a case file to read.

Emanuel called me the day he received it. "Josh, I'm over here reading this stuff and crying my eyes out. This is just awful what they did to this man. We have to help." He stayed involved. In October of 2007, he personally wrote the following letter to the Michigan Department of Corrections:

Dear Members of the Parole Board,

My career as a boxing trainer began in Detroit, Michigan in 1969. I still live in Detroit and continue to train both amateurs and championship-level professional fighters. Recently, I have come to know another kind of "fighter," who is very much in need of our help.

I have become familiar with the case of Walter Swift and his struggle to prove that he is innocent of a crime that has kept him incarcerated since 1982. … As I read more about Mr. Swift's case, I began to see for myself many of the glaring indications of Mr. Swift's innocence, such as his strong, corroborated alibi that accounts for his whereabouts at the time of the crime and the highly suggestive procedures used to obtain the victim's identification of Mr. Swift. Because I firmly believe in Mr. Swift's innocence, I am committed to helping secure his release in any way that I can. … I will use my contacts and resources to help Mr. Swift reintegrate into society and become a productive citizen of the Detroit community.

I strongly urge you to parole Mr. Swift and give him an opportunity to reclaim the 25 years that he has suffered due to his wrongful incarceration.

Sincerely,
Emanuel Steward

Seven months later, in early April 2008, I called Emanuel to tell him that the district attorney had agreed to vacate Swift's conviction.

"What does that mean? Does this mean that …" His voice began to break up.

"Yes, Emanuel," I said, my eyes welling with tears. "Walter Swift is going to be a free man."

We spent the next several minutes crying together over the phone. I told him that I'd let him know how Walter did when he got out.

"No, no, no," he said, "that's not good enough." He reminded me that he had made promises to the Innocence Project and in his letter to the parole board to help Walter once he got out. I told him he'd done enough. "No, this is just the beginning, Josh. Let's help Walter get back on his feet the best we can. He's going to need our help."

A few weeks later, I told Emanuel that Walter's exoneration hearing was going to be held on May 21, 2008, and that I would be traveling to Detroit to attend. He insisted that I stay at his house and that we go to the hearing together.

I arrived at 2:30 a.m. Emanuel had waited up for me. As I apologized for keeping him up, he insisted on giving me a tour of his home. When we arrived at the courthouse the next morning, police officers asked if they could take photos with him. Elderly women asked if they could give him a hug.

The courtroom was teeming with Walter's family and members of the media. As we sat in the courtroom before the hearing began, the assistant district attorney came over to shake his hand.

Vera Massey Jones was the judge who presided over the exoneration hearing. Upon taking the bench, she squinted into the crowded courtroom and the very first words out of her mouth were, "Is that Emanuel Steward in my courtroom?"

Emanuel stood and said, "Yes, Your Honor."

A giant smile consumed her face. "We are happy to have you here Mr. Steward. Welcome," she said.

"Honored to be here in support of Mr. Swift, Your Honor," Emanuel said. It was then that I realized the full extent of his reach in Detroit.

The hearing commenced and the judge formally vacated Walter's conviction. He was then led back to the jail next door to be processed out of the system. Several hours later, Walter emerged from the jail and entered the courthouse, clutching a garbage bag containing his worldly possessions. Reporters bombarded him with questions. He looked shell-shocked.

Emanuel walked over after one of the interviews ended and gently introduced himself. "Hi, Walter. I'm Emanuel Steward. Let me hold that for you." Emanuel took the garbage bag from Swift.

"I know who you are," Walter replied. "Thanks for everything you have done for me. You don't even know me, man, and you supported me … it means everything. Man … ain't this something."

"I'll drive you on over to your little welcome-home party," Emanuel told Walter. Emanuel and I walked with Walter across the street to the parking lot where Emanuel's Mercedes was parked. And that's how it went on May 21, 2008, when Emanuel Steward walked a wrongfully incarcerated man out of prison. After 26 long years, Walter Swift, a free man, rode away from the jailhouse in style.

For the next couple years, Emanuel indeed followed through on his promise to support Walter. He arranged a job for him, lent him money, invited him to his home for meals and spent countless hours talking and listening to Walter. I often told Emanuel that he had done enough. But he would always tell me, "Walter needs the help. Can't

TOM MIHALEK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Lennox Lewis was only one of many people who looked up to Steward.

nobody really imagine what this man went through."

I wish the story of Emanuel and Walter had a happier ending, but the sad reality is that Walter has struggled terribly since his exoneration. He, as many of the wrongfully incarcerated do, has battled substance abuse. He has had a difficult time holding down jobs and has suffered from the type of profound psychological issues that are the product of the inhumane confinement of an innocent man to a cage for more than a quarter century. Supporting the exonerated can be frustrating; they have a hard time trusting, are angry, paranoid, and suffer from debilitating depression. Emanuel went to great lengths to help Walter and it often was a thankless endeavor. Walter didn't show up for work at jobs Emanuel arranged for him. He called Emanuel countless times in the middle of the night saying that he was stranded and needed a ride. Through it all, Emanuel's support never wavered, not once.

When I would hear that he suspected Swift had stolen from him or had been smoking pot in his bathroom, I would tell Emanuel to confront him. Emanuel would tell me, "Josh, don't worry about it. It's just little things he takes – and he needs it more than me."

Toward the middle of 2010, Emanuel and Walter lost touch for good. Walter was in and out of substance-abuse programs and had stopped returning Emanuel's calls.

Up until the last time I spoke with Emanuel, just a month or so before he died, he asked me if I'd heard from Walter. "I worry about him," Steward said.

I never really understood how Emanuel was able to muster the patience and understanding he exhibited with Walter, but I got a better understanding during a visit I made to Detroit to check on Walter several months after he was exonerated. During my trip, Emanuel held an annual awards banquet for his amateur boxing program. Walter and I attended. These were 7-, 8- and 9-year-old kids and at the end of the dinner Emanuel presented awards. You could not help but marvel at how this man, who had trained scores of world champions and cavorted with celebrities, was so thrilled to be a part of the evening. He knew all of the kids' nicknames, their travel situations to and from the gym, their best punches. He hugged them like an adoring father as they accepted their awards and joked with their families. It was easy to see that he was a big part of their lives and a source of joy and strength for them. It was also easy to see that the reverse was true. The kids were a source of joy and strength for him as well.

And that is what I think he got out of helping Walter. Even though he wasn't able to remain a part of Walter's life, for a couple of years Emanuel was able to bring Walter joy and make him feel special. That was who Emanuel Steward was and that is the legacy he leaves. Yes, he'll be remembered for his accomplishments in the sport of boxing, for the 41 fighters he led to ultimate ring glory, for the amateur program that he nurtured from its infancy to the beacon of hope it became for so many young boys and girls that might have otherwise ended up in trouble. But I will always remember Emanuel for his humanity, his fundamental love of others, and his deep empathy for the human condition. He was a streaking comet of a man who was embraced by so many because the light he left in his wake was matched only by the genuineness with which it shined. I miss my friend. RING

Josh Dubin is a nationally renowned legal strategist and jury expert. He has represented Lennox Lewis, Shane Mosley, Kermit Cintron, Paulie Malignaggi and Zab Judah. He currently represents Andre Ward and Bryant Jennings.

A NO-BULLS**T EXPERIENCE

RING ANNOUNCER **DAVID DIAMANTE'S** TASTE FOR ADVENTURE TOOK HIM TO ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS EVENTS

By **Thomas Hauser**

Several years ago, I wrote, "The most conventional thing about David Diamante is his hair."

Diamante is the ring announcer with the stentorian voice who's instantly recognizable by dreadlocks that extend below his waist. He's also the in-arena voice of the NBA Brooklyn Nets. His most recent departure from convention led him to participate in one of the world's best-known spectacles: He ran with the bulls in Pamplona.

Pamplona is a city in northern Spain that was founded as a camp for Roman soldiers in 74 B.C. Each year, the festival of San Fermin is held there from July 6 through July 14. The highlight is the running of the bulls, made famous to non-Spaniards by Ernest Hemingway in his 1927 novel "The Sun Also Rises."

It happens each morning on the final eight days of the festival. Six bulls and six steers are let loose from a corral at one end of the course and rampage 900 yards through cordoned-off streets to a ring where the bulls will die that afternoon.

The people who "run with the bulls" position themselves at various points along the route and run to the arena ahead of the bulls. Barricades along the way keep the bulls on course but have openings wide enough for runners to slip through if they want out. Women have been allowed to participate since 1974, but virtually all of the runners are men.

Participants must be at least 18 years old and are required to run in the same direction as the bulls. Dozens of runners are injured each year, a handful of them seriously but mostly with cuts and bruises. A few get gored. There have been 15 deaths since 1924, the most recent occurring in 2009.

The obvious first question to ask Diamante was, "Are you out of your mind?"

"That's a fair question," he answered. "I'm not trying to get hurt. It's dangerous; I know that. But danger breeds excitement and a big part of life is facing your fears and conquering them. I have faith in my courage, my intelligence, my quickness and my physical strength. And I have a history of adventurous travel. Tibet, India, Somalia, Haiti,

Lucky for ring announcer David Diamante that he's as slick on his feet as he is with his words.

Honduras, the jungles of Colombia. When I was in Nicaragua, I met a guy who got in touch with me later and said, 'I'm going to Pamplona to run with the bulls. Do you want to come?' I told him, 'Count me in.' It was a calculated risk. Look, I ride a motorcycle every day in New York. If you do that on the Cross-Bronx Expressway with 18-wheelers on either side of you, what's a bull?"

Diamante ran with the bulls three times – on July 7, 8, and 10 – before leaving Pamplona on the morning of July 11. He'd never been to a bullfight before but went twice in Pamplona. Each time, all six bulls were killed.

"I'd be lying to you if I didn't admit to having reservations about bullfighting," he said. "They don't fight the bulls until the age of 5. Until then, the bull has a pretty good life; a lot better than the animals that are turned into the meat we eat. But no matter how you look at it, the bull is an unwilling participant in the fight. I'm not attacking what anyone else believes. I'm just speaking for me."

The running of the bulls in Pamplona starts at precisely 8 a.m., when a rocket is fired into the air and the bulls are released from their pen. They're big and they're angry.

Runners can position themselves anywhere on the course except within 30 yards of the pen. That gives the bulls a running start and the runners a chance to escape. Some runners start at the far end of the course where there's no danger.

"But let's be honest about it," Diamante said. "If you start off at the end of the course completely out of harm's way, you haven't really run with the bulls."

Diamante positioned himself as close as possible to the starting gate. By tradition, the runners wear red and white. He was wearing white pants, a white shirt, red scarf, red sash and an old pair of running shoes. The balconies and windows overlooking the streets and the area behind the street barricades were lined with spectators.

"You'd be an idiot if you didn't feel some fear," Diamante said of the experience. "I had an uneasy feeling when I was waiting for the rocket to go off before the start of the run. If you're gored, the initial wound is only the start of your problems. You can be trampled by the bull and dragged along the street. But I can honestly say that, in the moment before the rocket went off, there was no place on earth that I would rather have been."

As for the run itself, there were moments of truth.

"The first day, I reached out and touched two bulls on the side as they ran past me," Diamante said. "That was exhilarating. In my mind, I wasn't running from the bulls. I was running with them. But it's dangerous, and the other runners are as big a danger as the bulls. You're running. There are people in front of you who slow you down. Sometimes they fall down, and you have to jump over them."

Diamante's moment of crisis came on the third day that he ran.

"There are so many people in the street," he says, "that sometimes there's nowhere to go. A bull came right at me. I knew I was in trouble. And I was gored. But fortunately, the point of the horn ran across my stomach rather than into it."

Ten days later, Diamante still had a bruise on his abdomen where the bull's horn had grazed him an inch above his navel.

"But each time I ran," he said, "I was walking on air afterward. The high I got from participating in one of the world's great traditions, testing myself, and the camaraderie I felt with the other runners is something I'll treasure for the rest of my life. Either you do this sort of thing or you don't. I do it."

Of course, Michael Buffer would have done it wearing dress shoes and a tuxedo.

COURTESY OF DIAMANTE

FRANK BECOMES KELLIE

THOSE CLOSE TO THE FORMER FRANK MALONEY SUPPORT HIS DECISION TO BECOME A WOMAN

By **Gareth A Davies**

The former Frank Maloney says he has found peace as Kellie.

They say "expect the unexpected" in boxing. Still, no one saw coming the news that Frank Maloney will now go by the name of Kellie Maloney following a revelation in The Sunday Mirror newspaper that the former manager of Lennox Lewis is living as a woman and pursuing a sex change. The diminutive London fight figure, once renowned for tough talk and Union Jack suits, said, "I was born in the wrong body and have always known I was a woman. Living with the burden any longer would have killed me.

"What was wrong at birth is now being medically corrected," he continued. "I have a female brain. I knew I was different from the minute I could compare myself to other children. I wasn't in the right body. I was jealous of girls."

Upon hearing the news, Lewis admirably backed the 61-year-old. In a statement, the former world heavyweight champion said, "This world we live in isn't always cut and dried or black and white, and coming from the boxing fraternity, I can only imagine what a difficult decision this must be for Kellie.

"I think that all people should be able to live their lives in a way that brings harmony and inner peace. I respect Kellie's decision and say that if this is what brings about true happiness in her life, then so be it."

Robert Smith, Secretary of the British Boxing Board of Control, was equally magnanimous: "I know the boxing fraternity and it's a small group of people and everybody who is connected by the sport tends to be very supportive towards others. I know when it comes to promoters, managers and boxers, it's a business and a competition, but I do believe that when an issue occurs there is a great sense of camaraderie and support from the boxing community. It doesn't surprise me that some people on the periphery of the sport don't have the same feelings as those on the inside.

"Frank was Frank. He was a genuinely nice person and well-respected. I'm not surprised he's getting the support of the people within the sport. It's irrelevant whether he's a man or a woman. If she applied for a license, she'd be considered. I can't see any reason why she couldn't. Why not? She

INSET: CHARLIE CROWHURST/GETTY IMAGES; KARINA HESSLAND/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

knows what she's doing. … I'm not being funny, but she's got other issues on her plate at the moment. I'd have thought that [promoting] was the last thing on her mind right now."

When I pushed the button for Kellie Maloney's cell phone number on that Sunday, one thing had certainly remained the same: the sense of humor.

I asked whether an interview with The Telegraph would be possible. Her reply: "[You] have to ask will they pay ... as I have not worked for a year and to look this good costs a girl money."

Some things will never change.

★

BROOK-PORTER

Kell Brook thoroughly deserved to be the newly crowned IBF welterweight champion after claiming a majority decision over American Shawn Porter on Aug. 16 in Carson, California. He joined Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao as one of three holders of a world title belt at 147 pounds.

Some platform for the Yorkshireman, who improved to 33-0 and handed Porter his first defeat in his 26th pro fight. There are some major fight-nights ahead of Brook if he can retain the belt more than a couple of times.

Brook, always calm and composed, will have learned so much from this contest. He dug in deep and weathered an early storm while keeping the fight under control. Brook managed Porter's speed and awkwardness well, and his timing was on point. Porter looked crude, which, in fairness, he is.

It was a mature performance, a triumph against the odds, the 28-year-old having come on strong in the last five rounds to become the first British boxer to secure victory on U.S. soil against an unbeaten American world champion since Lloyd Honeyghan defeated undisputed welterweight king Donald Curry in 1986 to shock the world.

The obvious mega-fight in the U.K. would be with archrival Amir Khan. Brook has come up quietly in the shadow of the much-vaunted Khan.

Eddie Hearn, Brook's promoter, admitted after the fight that the likely route for Brook would be to take a big fight in Sheffield and then a contest with Khan next year. It could be on the scale of that blockbuster at Wembley Stadium between Carl Froch and George Groves in May. This was an achievement that will stay long in the annals of British boxing history.

★

COMMONWEALTH SUCCESS

The sight of amateur boxers competing without head guards was a peculiar one at July's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland. Less unusual, however, was the sight of shimmering medals hanging from the necks of young British amateurs.

Indeed, with the momentum of their powerful medal successes at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, boxers from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales combined to snare gold medals in seven of the 13 weight divisions at the 71-nation Commonwealth Games, with some eight boxers reaching the finals. England won seven medals, five of them gold, while Scotland, the home nation, grabbed two.

In total, seven of the boxers in the finals were members of the GB boxing squad and 11 members of that squad won medals. Englishmen Anthony Fowler and Scott Fitzgerald struck gold at middleweight and welterweight, respectively, while the accomplished Paddy Barnes (light flyweight, double Olympic bronze medalist, 2008 and 2012) and Michael Conlan (bantamweight, Olympic bronze 2012) brought home gold for Northern Ireland, and Charlie Flynn (lightweight) and Josh Taylor (light welterweight) claimed highest honors for Scotland.

Meanwhile, Joe Joyce, the English super heavyweight who defeated Australian Joe Goodall to claim gold, has effectively picked up where Britain's Olympic super heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua left off. A modern day heavyweight in every sense of the word, Joyce is also charismatic, articulate and interesting. Better still, he has well and truly mastered the art of excelling on canvas.

"I did fine art at university," he said. "My stuff was quite abstract. I started off trying to get as photo-realist as possible and then branched away from that and used a bit more symbology and got a bit more abstract.

"Pablo Picasso was interesting, he's one of my favorites, but I'm not as abstract as that. I quite like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Chuck Close, who inspired me to get into photo-realism. When you look up Close's work, it's quite abstract. There's a good use of color as well."

Google the artists. They are fascinating. Tragically, Basquiat died of a heroin overdose aged 27, but it is a hint of just how intriguing an individual Joyce is.

Less abstract, though, is Joyce's desire to win a gold medal at the

U.K. TOP 10

1. CARL FROCH
2. KELL BROOK
3. AMIR KHAN
4. CARL FRAMPTON
5. GEORGE GROVES
6. TYSON FURY
7. SCOTT QUIGG
8. JAMES DEGALE
9. JAMIE MCDONNELL
10. PAUL BUTLER

Five more: Tony Bellew, Nathan Cleverly, Martin Murray, Billy Joe Saunders and Matthew Macklin.
(Through fights of Aug. 17, 2014)

Welterweight Scott Fitzgerald won a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games.

ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Olympic Games in 2016 and then later turn professional. It's clear and very real. What's more, the gap between amateur and professional boxing seems to be narrowing all the time. This year the Commonwealth Games saw the removal of headgear from its male boxers.

"We feel that taking the head guards off is good for the boxers from a concussion point of view," said Dr. Mike Loosemore, the British Olympic team chief medical officer. "Although concussion is very rare in amateur boxing, there is certainly evidence that suggests the head guards increase the amount of concussion. There are approximately half the number of concussions without head guards. That sounds counterintuitive but we think it might be due to several things. One, the head is bigger because of the size of the head guard, which increases the torque and the amount of force you can put through the brain when you hit the head-guard. Two, your vision is restricted by the edge of the head guard and often the big blows coming in are hooks from around the side.

"And I think the biggest factor is that you might feel safer with the head guard on and therefore be inclined to leave your head where it shouldn't be. Certainly, with the head guards off, there has been a change of style in the boxing and we've seen boxers avoid getting hit a lot more."

The female boxers remained enclosed in headgear. Best friends Nicola Adams and Savannah Marshall both scored gold for England at the Games. The fleet-footed and amiable Adams, in narrowly beating Ireland's plucky Michaela Walsh in the final, now has the clean sweep – Olympic, European and Commonwealth golds.

"I've now got the small matter of Rio, which I'm really looking forward to," she said. "Hopefully I can create history again by becoming a double Olympic champion. Britain has never had one in boxing before, and I'd love to be able to do that.

"Everybody wants to beat Nicola Adams. I'm ranked No. 1 in the world, so everybody's coming for me now. They want to take my spot."

★

FURY-CHISORA

July promised big things for Tyson Fury. It was supposed to be the month in which he beat bitter domestic rival Dereck Chisora for a second time, which was supposed to take him one step closer to a shot at a version of the heavyweight title.

But, in the end, July wound up being one of the worst periods of the young heavyweight's life. First, Chisora, eight days from fight night, pulled out on account of a broken hand, and then, having weighed in alongside late-notice replacement Alexander Ustinov, a 6-foot-8 puncher from Russia, Fury learned of an illness to his uncle, Hughie, and decided to cancel his assignment on the morning of the fight. To make matters worse, the heavyweight's wife, Paris, also suffered a miscarriage during Fury's month from hell.

"The suggestion that we would fake my dear brother's position to avoid a fight with Ustinov is disgusting," said Peter Fury, his trainer. "What people also don't know is that Tyson had further bad news of his wife having a miscarriage. As Tyson's trainer, I was not going into a fight with my brother in a hospital fighting for his life, and with his wife and children in despair."

Still, there does appear light at the end of the tunnel for Tyson. The serial tweeter has been conspicuous by his absence in recent weeks, but a rescheduled date of Nov. 22 has been announced for his rematch with Chisora. Consider this the calm before yet another storm. He'll find his voice again. Then he'd be advised to touch wood every day for the foreseeable future.

★

GLYN LEACH'S PASSING

It is heartbreaking to report the passing of Glyn Leach, editor of Boxing Monthly, who died at 52 on Aug. 16. He was a brilliant curmudgeon, one of the most forthright and honest observers of the sport and an eccentric and much loved character who will be missed by so many in the industry. He gave so many young writers their first opportunity, was generous and was a great listener. Irreplaceable. Rest in Peace, Glyn.

★

JAMIE MOORE

Another fight scuppered due to unusual circumstances was Matthew Macklin's return to Ireland against Jorge Sebastian Heiland on Aug. 30. The perennial middleweight contender had no choice but to cancel after his head trainer, former opponent Jamie Moore, was shot at five times outside a mansion owned by the son of a suspected Irish crime boss in Marbella, Spain.

The 35-year-old, who trains Macklin at the Irishman's MGM Gym in Marbella, was hit in the legs and hip.

Moore's local newspaper, the Manchester Evening News, reported that the property was raided in 2010 as part of an operation involving Spanish police and the Serious Organised Crime Agency. That 2010 operation resulted in the arrest of 32 people.

Believed to be an innocent victim in this latest drama, Moore is expected to make a full recovery. After the shooting he tweeted: "Gutted and confused about what happened, but thank God I'm ok." Frankly, anyone who'd ever seen the former European champion box knows it takes more than a gunshot wound to keep him down. RING

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

Doug Fischer wrote that we really didn't know how good Kell Brook was until he fought Shawn Porter.

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

By **Doug Fischer**

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

Excerpts from Fischer's online column from the previous month appear in the printed edition of THE RING. The following excerpts are from the July 28, Aug. 4, 15 and 18 editions of the Monday and Friday mailbags.

BLAIR, from Scotland, was miffed that so many U.S. boxing writers and "experts" overlooked Kell Brook prior to the undefeated English welterweight's IBF title-winning majority decision over American standout Shawn Porter on Aug. 16 in Carson, California. He scored the fight for Brook by one round and was curious as to how Fischer – who was ringside – scored the bout. He also asked Fischer what's next for Brook and whether an all-British showdown with Amir Khan is possible.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: The Porter-Brook fight isn't the first time all of the so-called experts got it wrong and it sure as hell won't be the last.

As I stated prior to the fight, a lot of American scribes recognized Brook's talent but given the lack of Top 10 names on his resume, they just couldn't favor him over a rugged and athletic boxer-mauler like Porter, who had the names of two Top 10 contenders (Devon Alexander and Paulie Malignaggi) on his record.

That manner of thinking might not seem fair to Brook fans (or to Porter haters) but none us of really know how good a talented boxer is until he's been tested. U.S. boxing writers viewed Porter as Brook's big test (not the other way around).

I'm not saying that there *isn't* an American bias when it comes to ranking and respect for European boxers. It does exist. U.S.-born talent, such as Adrien Broner, often get ballyhooed and highly ranked before they've really been in tough.

We generally don't give the benefit of the doubt to "untested" non-American talents unless they've fought a lot on U.S. networks. I guess TV makes everything "real" to a lot of people. Edwin Valero and Gennady Golovkin were figments of my imagination until they fought on Showtime and HBO, respectively.

THE RING gave Brook the benefit of the doubt. We ranked him as high as No. 4 in our welterweight ratings. (He was the No. 5-rated 147-pounder going into the bout with Porter, who was ranked No. 4.) We were heavily criticized by fans and fellow media for having Brook as high as we did. I got more than a few emails from British fans telling me that the magazine should drop Brook in the ratings.

Brook was rated low or not at all by those who put together such rankings, which I understand. The best fighters he had beaten prior to facing Porter (Vyacheslav Senchenko, Carson Jones, Matthew Hatton and Hector Saldivia) were fringe contenders at the time he faced them. However, it should be noted that Keith Thurman, who has been climbing most lists, has yet to beat a highly ranked welterweight. So there's no denying that an American bias exists.

I saw the fight the same way you did. I thought it was close fight with a slight edge going to Brook based on his clean punching and ring generalship. I also thought Porter would get the nod. I'm glad I was wrong. The right man won the fight in my opinion.

I can definitely see Brook-Khan happening sometime next year. It's too big of a fight in the U.K. not to happen but mega-bouts like that take some time to arrange and finalize. If Brook can't hook in a big name like Juan Manuel Marquez for his first title defense, I wouldn't be surprised if he took on newly crowned European champ Leonard Bundu, who upset Frankie Gavin in August.

STAN, from the U.K., says he hopes Khan gets by proposed fights against Robert Guerrero and Devon Alexander so that Brook can "shut his overrated mouth." Stan can't imagine Khan going past seven rounds with Brook and wondered how Fischer viewed the matchup.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: If Khan can get by Guerrero or Alexander – and I believe he can, although it wouldn't be easy (particularly against Alexander) – the natural fight to make next year in England is a mega-showdown between the natives of Bolton and Sheffield. That fight would even draw significant attention here in the U.S.

I can see Brook-Khan going the distance, especially if the former 140-pound titleholder boxes the way Virgil Hunter had him box Luis Collazo in May. Still, I'd favor Brook to win that one, maybe by late stoppage. He's not as fast or busy as Khan but he's got a better foundation, superior concentration and more solid whiskers.

DROEKS MALAN, from South Africa, was impressed by Sergey Kovalev's Aug. 2 knockout victory against Blake Caparello and is fascinated by the WBO light heavyweight titleholder's Nov. 8 showdown with legendary IBF/WBA beltholder Bernard Hopkins. Malan has nothing but respect for the 175-pound standouts, adding that it's "refreshing to see two champions willing to test themselves against the best." He can't count Hopkins out, even though the master boxer is almost 50 years old, but he said that he can envision the Russian puncher taking the future Hall of Famer out with one of his punishing body shots. Malan, who views Kovalev as a tougher challenge for Hopkins than RING champ Adonis Stevenson, asked Fischer's opinion on the matchup.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I can't add anything more to the Hopkins-Kovalev matchup than what you said about it: "It is refreshing to see two champions willing to test themselves against the best. Kovalev is no doubt the most dangerous man in the division and the nearly 50-year-old Hopkins is the personification of old-school ring intelligence."

That's the fight in a nutshell and that's why boxing (and maybe even general sports) media will cover the event with anticipation and it's why fans will watch with it with interest.

It doesn't matter to me whether Hopkins beats Kovalev at this stage of his career. What matters to me is that he's challenging himself. He's taking a fight that most fans and media think he might lose; some even fear for his health (and rightfully so). When Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao fans ask me why I consider "B-Hop" to be an all-time great and not their heroes, it's not hard at all for me to explain why. I just point out that Hopkins has the character of the great ones. It's the "old man" who seeks to be the undisputed champion of his division; it's the "old man" who sidesteps boxing's B.S. politics and helps to get the necessary fights made. It's the "old man" who is pursing the kind of matchups that force oddsmakers to install him as the underdog.

Personally, I don't consider Hopkins to be an underdog vs. "The Krusher" but I don't see the ultra-veteran as a big favorite, either. You're absolutely correct that Kovalev is a more complete boxer-puncher than Kelly Pavlik was when Hopkins outclassed the reigning middleweight champ, and it will be interesting to see if Kovalev can tee off on the cagiest fighter of this generation the way he has all his other opponents.

JERRY ODOM

THE POWERFUL 168-POUNDER IS CONTENT TO LEARN FOR NOW

By **Keith Idec**

Jerry Odom determined almost immediately in the spring of 2007 that boxing would be his ticket out of Paradise.

Tall for his age and athletic enough to play every position from center to tailback, Odom was a sought-after football prospect as an eighth-grader at Ron Wilson Middle School in Washington, D.C. He just spent so much time fighting in Northeast D.C.'s Paradise projects, the same development that produced former WBC middleweight champ Keith Holmes, Odom figured he should try boxing.

The quiet 14-year-old fell in love with the sport the first day he tried it, eventually moved to nearby Bowie, Maryland, to live with his uncle, Kenneth Williams, and never played another down of organized football. Seven years later, Odom is a powerful super middleweight prospect still learning on the job to make up for starting a little later than most promising fighters his age.

Boxing broadcasters and writers have taken notice of his raw power, but Odom regularly watches film of Muhammad Ali, Ray Leonard, Mike Tyson, Pernell Whitaker and Paul Williams to help shape his evolving game. His intent is to follow the studious Tyson's example of how to respect and appreciate the game's history, not necessarily Tyson's overly aggressive approach inside the ring.

"I just look at different fighters, different styles," Odom said, "and anything good I take from them and add to my arsenal, change it up."

Odom, 21, displayed diversity in what he and his handlers considered his introduction to the boxing public July 25 in Verona, New York. Matched against Vilier Quinonez, a crafty Cuban southpaw with more than 300 amateur fights on his resume, Odom overcame a cut near his left eye to drop Quinonez (8-1, 5 knockouts) in the fourth and seventh rounds on his way to a seventh-round technical-knockout win.

Odom's impressive victory was part of Showtime's 200th telecast of "ShoBox: The New Generation." His performance epitomized the intent of the series.

"Whether we see him go down the line to become a big-time fighter, he showed a lot of heart, showed a little bit of everything," said Showtime analyst Raul Marquez, a former IBF junior middleweight titleholder. "That's what you want to see in a fighter that's starting, like Odom."

His victory over Quinonez marked the first time he went beyond four rounds. It also was just the third time he faced a foe with a winning record.

"I think I showed everybody I wanted it," Odom said. "I showed I can go the distance if I have to and the power doesn't decrease as the rounds go. I'm just learning as I go. [Getting rounds] is not that important. If it happens, it happens, but I've learned how to pace myself."

GH3 Promotions, the Newark, New Jersey-based company that represents Odom, has enabled him to learn frequently since the 2012 National Golden Gloves 178-pound champion made his pro debut in October of the same year. Activity is

Jerry Odom wants to be more than just a big puncher.

KEVIN C. COX/GETTY IMAGES

THE ESSENTIALS

Age: 21

Weight class: Super middleweight

Height: 6 feet 1 inch

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Washington, D.C.

Record: 12-0 (11 KOs)

Biggest strengths: Possesses power in both hands that can captivate knockout-craving fight fans ★ Has the necessary nasty streak and toughness to survive trying moments in the ring ★ Not just a puncher. Has displayed an ability to box against athletic movers when required.

Biggest question marks: Conditioning hasn't been tested because only one of his 12 professional fights has gone beyond four rounds and none have reached the eighth round ★ Needs to face formidable opposition on a consistent basis. Just three of his 12 opponents have had winning records.

important to Odom, who resides and trains in Atlanta, because he feels he is a work in progress under the watchful eye of trainer Xavier Biggs.

"In a year, I would say I'll be fighting for a [regional] title," said Odom, who lost two fights to unbeaten New Yorker Marcus Browne at the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials. "I'll know and feel it when I'm ready. When I'm ready, those bigger fights will fall in order without me asking. It's important to be ready because you don't want to go in and get hurt. I'm just building up to the point where I'm ready for that step up. I'm learning. When I get there, I want to have the rest of my tools." RING

Keith Idec covers boxing for The Record, of Woodland Park, N.J. He can be reached on Twitter @Idecboxing.

3 MORE TO WATCH

JAMEL HERRING
LIGHTWEIGHT

Golden Boy Promotions and manager Al Haymon have kept Herring, who's tall (5 feet 10 inches) for his weight class, very busy since the American Olympian made his pro debut in December 2012. Herring (8-0, 5 KOs), a Cincinnati resident raised in Coram, New York, has been matched moderately but could be placed on a faster track because the former Marine will be 29 by year's end.

IVAN NAJERA
LIGHTWEIGHT

This San Antonio native is not a big puncher yet employs an all-action style that should make him popular among television viewers as he receives more exposure. The 21-year-old Najera (14-0, 8 KOs), who's promoted by Bob Arum's Top Rank Inc., is viewed as an eventual opponent for popular, powerful Puerto Rican prospect Felix Verdejo (14-0, 10 KOs).

LUIS ROSA
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

A rugged brawler who tends to bend boxing's rules, this New Haven, Connecticut, resident recorded the biggest win of his four-year pro career May 31 in Las Vegas. Rosa (17-0, 7 KOs) overcame a fifth-round knockdown and a point deduction for low blows to defeat Luis Del Valle by unanimous decision in a 10-rounder.

Studies have found that southpaws, such as Winky Wright, have a physical edge over their orthodox counterparts but might be more fearful.

JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

DO SOUTHPAWS HAVE AN ADVANTAGE?

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS YES … AND NO

By **Scott LaFee**

Over the history of professional boxing, there have been some notable southpaw boxers – Tiger Flowers, Winky Wright, Pernell Whitaker and Joe Calzaghe, among them – with pretty glossy win-loss records.

Conventional wisdom says left-handed boxers enjoy a peculiar advantage, which may figure in their ring success. Because they comprise just 10 percent of the general population, lefties must broadly adapt to living in a right-handed world. For southpaw boxers, that means mostly sparring with and fighting orthodox boxers.

Conversely, right-handed boxers face off much less frequently against lefties. All other things being equal, that supposedly equates to a decided advantage for the left-handed fighter. It's hard for a right-hander to prepare for a type of fighter he rarely sees. "I don't want you messing with southpaws," warns Apollo Creed's trainer in the first Rocky movie. "They do everything backwards."

This notion has garnered some scientific support. In 2005, researchers at the University of Montpellier in France decided to investigate why lefties persist,

particularly since assorted studies have found that left-handed people are more likely to be schizophrenic, alcoholic, dyslexic, get into accidents and die young – all things that logically might have induced lefties to evolve out of existence long ago.

The French scientists surveyed nine primitive societies on five continents. They reported that the more violent the society (higher murder rates and such), the more likely it contained a greater percentage of left-handed citizens because even though they were fewer in number, lefties tended to prevail in battle more often. Just as in boxing, explained study author Charlotte Faurie at the time, "the fact that left-handers are less common means they have a surprise effect."

In 2008, the British Journal of Sports Medicine published a study that looked specifically at the impact of left- and right-handedness in terms of boxing success. The researchers analyzed the records of 22 semi-professional or amateur members of a Turkish boxing club. The boxers ranged in age from 17 to 46, had been boxing from four to 15 years and represented almost every weight class. Eight were left-handed; 14 were right-handed.

The scientists found that southpaw boxers did, in fact, enjoy a lower losing percentage than right-handed boxers. They speculated that left-handed athletes might have some sort of neurological advantage, and concluded that they "should never be forced to convert to right-handedness. Instead, they should be supported both verbally and in terms of equipment, and they should be motivated."

Other studies have also contended that lefties do, as a group, enjoy superior spatio-motor skills and quicker response times than righties. A 2006 Australian National University study published in the journal Neuropsychology suggested left-handed people are faster at processing multiple stimuli because both hemispheres of their brains process incoming information compared to just the left side for right-handed persons.

Being left-handed is no guarantee of success in the ring, of course. Indeed, some studies point to potential southpaw disadvantages. A 2011 report presented at the annual conference of the British Psychological Society found that left-handed volunteers were likely to be more affected by fear than right-handed. Specifically, they were more likely to show signs of post-traumatic stress syndrome.

"It appears these are tied to the way the brain makes memories during fearful experiences," study author Carolyn Choudhary told The Telegraph. "It is apparent the two sides of the brain have different roles in PTSD and the right-hand side of the brain seems to be involved in fear. In people who are left-handed, the right hand side of their brain is dominant, so it may have something to do with that."

Boxers, of course, should be fearless – or at least have short memories.

It's probably not useful to fight angry either, but a small 2010 study published in The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease reaffirms previous findings that left-handed people are more prone to negative emotions, most notably anger. The study suggests that the brains of left-handed people exhibit a greater imbalance in activity between hemispheres when processing emotions, resulting in less modulation of anger.

An interesting aside: The study measured brain activity using a method called tympanic membrane temperature, which basically means assessing how hot the inner ear gets. Angry persons literally had hotter heads, which also probably isn't something a boxer wants in the ring.

So what does it all mean? Probably not much. Being left-handed may confer a slight advantage, but ultimate success demands a fighter have plenty of the other right stuff. RING

Author Malissa Smith explores the great fighters and fights in her book, including the historic clash between Christy Martin and Laila Ali.

CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES

THE BIBLE OF WOMEN'S BOXING

A NEW BOOK PROVIDES A RICH, COMPELLING HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE SPORT

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

Author Malissa Smith humbly calls her new book "A History of Women's Boxing," not "the" history. But make no mistake about it, when it comes to the Sweeter Science, this 346-page tome is the Bible, one that was sorely needed when it comes to this often neglected area of boxing.

The book was written out of necessity since a thesis Smith was doing for her Master's degree hit dead end after dead end in terms of the availability – and accuracy – of information.

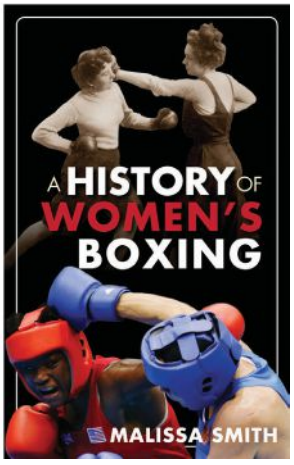
"I was trying to say women's boxing is a really important subject for study and it's important for sports history," Smith told THE RING. "Then I was approached by this publisher (Rowman & Littlefield) and I jumped at the opportunity. It meant that I could try to at least take a stab at throwing the gauntlet out there and then have

other scholars pick it up. And that's why I call it 'a' history and not 'the' history.

"I just tried to do my best to bring out the breadth of it, the fact that there's 300 years of history."

Smith, the owner of the girlboxing.org website and someone who still makes time to spar weekly at Brooklyn's Gleason's Gym near her home, isn't one to sing her own praises. So leave it to this scribe to do it for her.

The detail Smith provides is impressive. For example, I dare any women's boxing aficionado to describe obscure fighters such as 18th-century boxers Elizabeth Wilkinson Stokes and Bruising Peg or "The Female John L. Sullivan" Hattie Stewart as Smith has. It's fascinating stuff, meticulously researched, and provides a rich history – in and out of the ring – not just for fans but for the ladies who ply their trade in the sport and now have a book they can present to family and friends and say, "This is who I am and where I come from."



"It goes in concert with the fact that female boxing is an Olympic sport; it's legitimizing it," Smith said. "If you want to discount women fighting in 1720, that's fine. But if you really look at true boxing and boxing competitively, it's been around for well over a hundred years. And I think it gives fighters the sense that, 'Oh, I'm part of a proud tradition and there are some people I can model myself after.'"

Of course, all the "heavyweights" of the sport are well-represented in this tome – Christy Martin, Lucia Rijker, Laila Ali, et al. – a group that helped form the Golden Age of the sport in the late 1990s and the early part of the millennium.

"There were a lot of fights and they were visible and they were getting paid more money and they were on the air," said Smith. But after Ali came the daughters of Joe Frazier, George Foreman, and even Roberto Duran, and the sport's surge went from a roar to a whimper, and some would say it has yet to recover.

That fall and other issues the sport has faced over the years are covered in the book, including everything from the lack of female fighters on U.S. television, the tragic death of Becky Zerlentes in 2005 and the prejudice encountered by the ladies from both inside and outside the boxing establishment.

And while the inclusion of women's boxing in the 2012 London Games is a nice way to close the book and this era in the sport, Smith is hopeful that there will be many more positive chapters to be written in the future.

"Women are continuing to fight, which they always have, and they're better and better at what they do," she said. "There are more fights now than there were five years ago and there's more diversity in the fighting. Because of the success of women's MMA, I feel that whether it's Stephen Espinoza at Showtime or somebody at ESPN or FOX, somebody's going to say, 'You know what, let's give it a shot [on television].'"

She laughs.

"I guess I'm an optimist."

We can use all we can get.

WOMEN'S TOP 10

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 25-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 32-9-1 (16 KOS)
Featherweight

3. YESICA YOLANDA BOPP
Argentina • 27-1 (12 KOs),
Flyweight

4. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 20-3-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

5. AVA KNIGHT
U.S. • 12-2-3 (5 KOs)
Junior flyweight

6. DIANA PRAZAK
Australia • 13-2 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

7. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 19-1 (9 KOs)
Lightweight

8. MARCELA ELIANA ACUNA
Argentina • 41-6-1 (18 KOs)
Junior featherweight

9. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 29-1 (13 KOs)
Lightweight

10. MELISSA HERNANDEZ
U.S. • 19-5-3 (6 KOs)
Featherweight

Through fights of Aug. 17, 2014

A NEW DREAM

AFTER A DEVASTATING SHORTFALL IN LONDON, **MARLEN ESPARZA** HAS HER EYES LOCKED ON GOLD AT THE 2016 OLYMPICS

By Joseph Santoliquito

Marlen Esparza had endorsements with CoverGirl, Nike, Coca-Cola, McDonald's. And more were lined up. The Olympic flyweight had a face attached to a name, unlike the obscurity in which most American Olympic boxers walk. All that was missing in 2012 was a gold medal.

The blueprint leading up to the London Olympics and a lifetime dream of standing on the top podium was shattered by a bronze medal. It was a result unimaginable to the 25-year-old Esparza, who, she said, screamed and cried in her Olympic dorm room for about five hours afterward.

Friends and family had warned her about the potential for heartbreak but this was the visceral, cutting finding-your-boyfriend-in-bed-with-your-best-friend variety. Esparza's "boyfriend" was boxing – and he had betrayed her.

It took her months to hit the reset button. But eventually she did.

Fast forward to today and the fiery 5-foot-2 ball of muscle has a rekindled passion for boxing. Her new goal is to erase London – and "the worst moment of my life," she said – by attaining gold in the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

She feels the disappointment has helped her prepare for success in 2016. First among the fistful of lessons she took from the London loss was how to heal so that she could look forward again.

"Being out in the public I think helped me from going into a complete shell after London," Esparza said. "It helped me get over the loss. I kept being told I achieved a lot, that winning a bronze medal at the Olympics is a big deal. I didn't think it was.

"When you expect something at the fullest, like going into a fight that you know you're going to win, you need to pump yourself up. I kept thinking about London saying to myself that there was no way I was going to lose. If I went into the Olympics with a little uncertainty, I don't think I would have crashed as loudly. Sometimes, you can't avoid those feelings. It was the only time I was completely wrong."

Marlen Esparza beat rival Virginia Fuchs en route to winning the flyweight title at the 2014 USA Boxing National Championships.

She didn't want to hear how she made history by becoming the first American woman to win an Olympic boxing match and the first U.S. woman to medal in the sport, which was introduced in 2012. The fact she was only one of two U. S. fighters to medal – the other being Olympic gold medalist Claressa Shields – in London didn't mean much.

What haunted her was a 10-8 semifinal loss to eventual gold medalist Ren Cancan of China, the same woman who beat her in the 2012 world championships. She had beaten Karlha Magliocco of Venezuela 24-16 in the quarters, her only other fight.

After London, Esparza didn't get back into the gym until early December 2012. She didn't fight until March 2013. But once she did, she quickly regained her old form. In July 2014, she won the national title for the eighth consecutive time.

Esparza is originally from Houston but now lives and trains at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, which allows her to focus solely on boxing and serves as inspiration. And that might not be the only change working in her favor going into 2016.

A much-criticized computer system has been used in scoring Olympic boxing since Roy Jones Jr.'s controversial loss in 1988. The professional 10-point-must scoring system will be used in Brazil, which suits Esparza's boxer-puncher style.

"The old point system limited the fighters," she said. "With this new scoring, based on the 10-9 system like the pros, it helps me. I consider myself a boxer-puncher. The previous point system took away from my power. I'm about 70 percent where I need to be to master the new system but it's something I'm definitely more comfortable with."

She has also found contentment. It has taken time. London matured her. It forced her to see a side of herself that's not always pleasant to see. She found that she could move forward after failure. She found she was stronger than she expected.

"I still love boxing," he said. "It won't go away because there was a part of me that didn't want it to go away. It's something I genuinely enjoy. I feel that I was born to box. There is a 10-year-old girl fighting who 10 years from now will do something amazing. I used to be that 10-year-old girl dreaming about an Olympic gold medal. That dream is still there. I'm in a better place right now. I just can't let it go."

RICK KERN/GETTY IMAGES FOR HBO

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

GENNADY GOLOVKIN TKO 3 DANIEL GEALE

Date: July 26
Site: Madison Square Garden, N.Y.
Division: Middleweight
Weights: Golovkin 159.8 pounds, Geale 159.2
RING rating (going into fight): Golovkin No. 1, Geale No. 2
Network: HBO

★ Gennady Golovkin made a cameo appearance on Broadway in the musical production of "Rocky" a couple of nights before he fought Daniel Geale at Madison Square Garden.

It didn't last long.

Neither did Geale. He was gone within three rounds, another victim in a streak of 17 successive stoppages for the seemingly unstoppable Golovkin (30-0, 27 KOs).

There had been a lot of hype – or hope – that Geale (30-3, 16 KOs) would be competitive. But it started badly for the Australian when he tripped on a camera strap and fell in the opening moments. It got worse. A Golovkin combo dropped him in the second. At 2:43 of the third, it was over after a Golovkin right floored him again.

Geale, an ex-160-pound champion, looked like just another extra in a Golovkin show that is still waiting for a co-star. It's a dilemma. Golovkin is almost too good for his own good. The more he wins, the more he adds to his reputation as boxing's most feared fighter. The demolition of Geale is another reason to stay away for all of the major players between 154 and 168 pounds.

"I walked over to Golovkin after the fight and I said, 'Whatever anyone said about you, you are better than that,'" Gary Shaw, Geale's promoter, told

MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES

Gennady Golovkin (right) needed only three rounds to put Daniel Geale away.

ringside media. "He's the best 160-pounder I've ever seen. He has all the tools and all the moves. I thought Geale could take him to a decision. The better man won tonight.

"There's nobody at 160, 154 and I'm not sure there's anyone at 168 who could be competitive with him for 12 rounds, except maybe Andre Ward."

But Ward is stuck in legal limbo. He hasn't fought in 2014. He has tried to get out of a contract with promoter Dan Goossen and failed. Meanwhile, Goossen has countered with a $10 million defamation lawsuit. For the foreseeable future, it looks as if Ward will be fighting only in court.

Meanwhile, Miguel Cotto is playing it safe. In mid-August, there was talk that he would fight Andy Lee in December. It's a business decision. Cotto, who won a piece of the middleweight title in a stoppage of Sergio Martinez, figures to beat Lee in a bout that sets up a rich showdown with Canelo Alvarez in 2015. Golovkin would put that payday in serious jeopardy.

"Now, I only want unification fights," Golovkin said. "I want Cotto."

Instead, Golovkin will fight Marco Antonio Rubio on Oct. 18 at StubHub Center in Carson, California. It'll be Golovkin's first fight in Southern California against a solid Mexican, who has won six straight since a 2012 loss to Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

But Rubio's chances? This time, a cameo role in Hollywood might last longer.

BRANDON RIOS DQ 9 DIEGO CHAVES

Date: Aug. 2
Site: The Cosmopolitan, Las Vegas
Division: Welterweight
Weights: Rios 147 pounds, Chaves 148
RING rating (going into fight): Neither fighter rated
Network: HBO

★ The column on the left side of Brandon Rios' record got an addition. It was a win. But it didn't feel like one. "It is what it is," Rios said.

A mess was what it was.

There were no winners in a victory that Rios (32-2-1, 23 KOs) recorded as the result of a ninth-round disqualification of Diego Chaves (23-2, 19 KOs).

Chaves got the loss but not much of an explanation. Referee Vik Drakulich got most of the criticism for not exerting control over a bout that degenerated into chaos. Top Rank boss Bob Arum got angry at U.S. immigration for a delay in issuing Chaves a visa. Nobody got to celebrate.

With some reported help from Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Chaves finally got the visa but only frequent-flier miles to show for it. He might have been better off if he had stayed in Argentina.

"I want to fight again with Brandon Rios," Chaves said.

If there's a rematch, please tell immigration to withhold the visa this time. Once was more than enough. Rios escaped without a third straight loss. But he didn't escape the emergency room because of dizziness and a shoulder injury. He also was checked for a possible abrasion to an eye.

"He kept grabbing my head," said Rios, who punctuated his anger with expletives and accused Chaves of thumbing him repeatedly in his eye. "What could I do?"

Plenty.

Rios, a brawler by nature, is not afraid to retaliate. Every chance he got, he cussed at Chaves. In the fifth round, he drove the Argentine welterweight onto the canvas. In the NFL, it would have been an unassisted tackle. In boxing, it was just a foul. Drakulich, who penalized Chaves for clinching in the third, penalized Rios for the takedown. From there, things just escalated. In the sixth, Drakulich warned against head-butting and then threatened a disqualification. In the eighth, Chaves lost another point, this time for shoving an open-handed glove into Rios' face.

Chaves was disqualified at 1:26 of the ninth after he had Rios in a headlock and seemed to rub his glove back and forth on Rios' face. There was no official explanation.

"I don't know what I did," Chaves said.

Brandon Rios (left) and Diego Chaves engaged in a particularly ugly fight.

Chaves did enough to raise further questions about Rios. Chaves led by one point on two scorecards at the time of the DQ. He was quick and precise enough to make Rios, who had lost successive bouts to Mike Alvarado and Manny Pacquiao, look like a one-dimensional brawler.

In mid-August, there was talk of a fight between Rios and Ruslan Provodnikov. If it happens, Rios will be coming off an official victory but burdened with the questions that come with defeat.

BROOK: STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES; RIOS: CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK

KELL BROOK MD 12 SHAWN PORTER

Date: Aug. 16
Site: StubHub Center, Carson, Calif.
Division: Welterweight
Weights: Brook 146.5, Porter 146.75
RING rating (going into fight): Brook No. 5, Porter No. 4
Network: Showtime

★ Kell Brook had hoped to introduce himself to an America that didn't know him with a performance that answered some questions among U.K. fans who did.

Mission accomplished on both fronts.

There's still a ways to go but Brook put himself on the welterweight radar in only his second fight in the U.S. by beating Shawn Porter with a decision that eliminated some doubt about whether he was a paper tiger.

Brook arrived in California unproven, unknown and unbeaten. He left the unproven and unknown tags at StubHub Center. Brook (33-0, 22 KOs) returned to Sheffield with only the unbeaten still attached to baggage repacked with a possible showdown against rival Amir Khan at London's Wembley Stadium next year. There was even talk about Floyd Mayweather Jr.

His upset of Porter (24-1-1, 15 KOs) wasn't easy. It wasn't expected to be. At times, it was messy. Porter's bulldog-like tenacity forced Brook to clinch, hold and hold on, especially in the middle rounds. Would that have worked against the more versatile Khan or Mayweather's unchallenged skillset?

Doubt was there, even on the cards. Two American judges scored it for Brook, 117-111 and 116-112. But it was a draw, 114-114, on the card held by Dave Parris of the U.K. Brook didn't convince the one judge who probably knew him best.

Still, it was only the beginning in the second chapter of a career that Brook believes will lead to international stardom.

"I've been dreaming about this moment since I was 9 years old," Brook said after winning his first major title, the IBF 147-pound version. "It's unbelievable. I was scrappy and not as slick as I wanted to be. But I'm the world champion now, baby. I was born to do this."

Brook talks about world titles as though they are his destiny. What Brook sees as destiny, however, might be an illusion, especially in a division dominated by Mayweather. Still, his victory has given him a chance at fulfilling a dream born when he walked into Sheffield's Wincobank gym and saw Naseem Hamed.

There were questions about whether Brook's record was built on soft opposition. Porter was a lot of things, but soft was not one of them. He was on a roll with victories over Devon Alexander and Paulie Malignaggi. He was favored, mostly because Brook had never faced anybody with those credentials. Injuries had forced cancellations and left Brook in limbo.

"Now the only champions at 147 pounds are Floyd Mayweather, Manny Pacquiao and Kell Brook," Brook told RingTV.com. "That's massive. Welterweight is the hottest division. I just want to be involved in huge fights."

Huge might be the next step.

Kell Brook (left) took a giant step forward with his victory over Shawn Porter.

NO. 9 BRYANT JENNINGS SD 12 NO. 10 MIKE PEREZ

July 26, Madison Square Garden, N.Y (HBO)

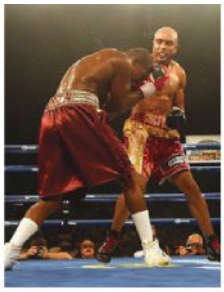
★ A shot at a heavyweight title now belongs to Bryant Jennings but there was nothing else to brag about in his victory over Mike Perez. There was only controversy.

Jennings got the split decision after Perez lost a point for hitting on the break in the 12th round.

"It doesn't matter, as long as I get the win," said Jennings (19-0, 10 KOs), the mandatory challenger for the winner of a planned fight between Bermane Stiverne and Deontay Wilder.

But it mattered a lot to Perez (20-1-1, 12 KOs), who lost on two cards 115-112 and 114-113. A third card favored Perez 114-113.

"I won the fight," said Perez, who then turned his anger on referee Harvey Dock with an allegation that might've been his way of asking for a rematch. "The referee stole the fight."



GABRIEL CAMPILLO TKO 5 THOMAS WILLIAMS JR.

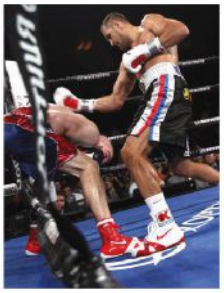
Aug. 1, Shelton, Wash. (ESPN)

★ Thomas Williams Jr. had an unexpected collision in his bid to get in line for a shot at the light heavyweight elites. While all the talk was about Sergey Kovalev and Bernard Hopkins, Williams ran into a so-called gatekeeper.

Gabriel Campillo, 35, a former titleholder, slammed that gate shut on Williams' immediate prospects with a punishing fifth-round stoppage.

Campillo (24-6-1, 10 KOs) busted Williams up, opening a wound above his left eye that spilled blood and blinded him throughout the next round. After the fifth, the ringside physician said no more. There was no argument from the 26-year-old Williams (17-1, 12 KOs) or his corner.

Instead, it was time to take a second look and re-evaluate a career that is still promising yet needs a comeback.



NO. 2 SERGEY KOVALEV TKO 2 BLAKE CAPARELLO

Aug. 2, Atlantic City, N.J. (HBO)

★ Sergey Kovalev took care of business but not without a scare that – for a flash – had his promoter and Bernard Hopkins wondering whether the biggest fight in 2014 would happen.

It will. Kovalev-Hopkins is still on for November.

Kovalev (25-0-1, 23 KOs) was down in the first round, caught by an improbable left from Blake Caparello (19-1-1, 6 KOs).

"Life flashed before my eyes," Kovalev promoter Kathy Duva said 24 hours after putting together the Hopkins fight.

As it turns out, perhaps nobody was more surprised than Caparello. In the second, Kovalev turned the knockdown into an aberration by stopping his opponent, who was down three times before it was over at 1:47 of the round.

The Hopkins fight is a dream, said Kovalev. He made sure to keep it alive.

NO. 8 JESSIE VARGAS UD 12 ANTON NOVIKOV

Aug. 2, Las Vegas, (HBO)

★ Home has its advantages and Las Vegas junior welterweight Jessie Vargas appeared to have a closet full of them in a decision over Anton Novikov that was ripped for being one-sided.

Vargas (25-0, 9 KOs) grabbed early momentum but Novikov (29-1, 10 KOs) eventually found the energy to get into his rhythm during the fourth round.

Novikov's body-work forced Vargas to drop his hands and the Las Vegas resident's jab, potent throughout the first three rounds, became increasingly ineffective. The judges evidently didn't notice. They appeared to favor Vargas' power. On the cards, Vargas was a 118-111, 117-111 and 118-111 winner.

Many seated in press row scored it a draw or narrowly favored Novikov. For Vargas, there was a message in the margin: Stay at home.

CHAMPION DANNY GARCIA KO 2 ROD SALKA

Aug. 9, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Showtime)

★ Junior welterweight champion Danny Garcia came into the ring wearing a mask. But there was no covering up what happened.

Garcia's knockout of Rod Salka was a mismatch. There was controversy about why it was allowed to happen. Let's just say it shouldn't have. Salka (19-4, 3 KOs) was a 50-to-1 underdog. A fan in line for beer at a Barclays concession stand had as much of a chance against Garcia as Salka did.

Garcia (29-0, 17 KOs) dropped Salka three times in the second round. It was over at 2:31 of the round when a left hook from Garcia, who is expected to face Lamont Peterson next, knocked Salka unconscious before he hit the canvas.

It was as predictable as it was dangerous. No way to disguise it.

NO. 2 LAMONT PETERSON TKO 10 EDGAR SANTANA

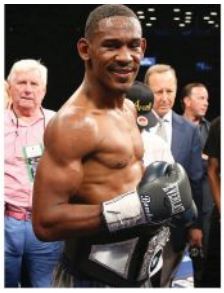
Aug. 9, Brooklyn, N.Y (Showtime)

★ It was an easy night of work for Lamont Peterson. It was even easier for Danny Garcia. It was hard only for the Barclays Center crowd and Showtime audience.

A night of mismatches left everybody wondering why Garcia-Peterson was bypassed for a Peterson blowout of Edgar Santana followed by a bigger blowout in Garcia's stoppage of Rod Salka.

There was no celebrating. Just a lot of finger-pointing, second-guessing and a promise from promoter Oscar De La Hoya, who said he would speak with Al Haymon and get Garcia-Peterson done.

"I actually thought I should have got him out of there sooner," said Peterson (33-2-1, 17 KOs) of Santana (29-5, 20 KOs), who was finished at 2:48 of the 10th, thanks to a ringside physician who – like everybody else – had seen enough.



DANNY JACOBS TKO 5 JARROD FLETCHER

Aug. 9, Brooklyn, N.Y. (Showtime)

★ There was a time when family and friends surrounded a hospital bed to console and comfort Danny Jacobs in his battle against a rare form of bone cancer. Three years later, they gathered around a ring in Jacobs' hometown to cheer him to an impressive victory over Jarrod Fletcher.

"You can have the strength to overcome anything," Jacobs (28-1, 25 KOs) said after his third straight win since overcoming the disease.

Jacobs was stronger in just about every category against Fletcher (18-2, 10 KOs), a 2008 Olympian. He dropped him in the first round with a left. In the fifth, he dropped him again with a right. Fletcher got up, but was clearly in trouble. It was stopped at 2:58 of the round.

"A miracle," said Jacobs, who hopes it continues in a possible showdown with WBO titleholder Peter Quillin.

ANTHONY DIRRELL UD 12 NO. 5 SAKIO BIKA

Aug. 16, Carson, Calif. (Showtime)

★ Anthony Dirrell has a championship belt. It represents the WBC's super middleweight title. But it means a lot more to Dirrell.

It's a symbol of his biggest victory. Like Danny Jacobs, he beat cancer, lymphoma.

By surviving he resurrected a chance to fulfill his dream of winning a major title and did so in a rematch against Sakio Bika, against whom he'd fought to a draw in December.

"I already overcame the biggest fight of my life," said Dirrell (27-0-1, 22 KOs) after surviving a rugged 12 rounds with a 114-113, 116-111, 117-110 victory on the scorecards.

A dirty fight was expected after what had happened eight months earlier. Sure enough, there was a head butt in the third. Bika (32-6-3, 21 KOs) was penalized in the eighth for a low blow.

"I was never close to giving up," said Dirrell, unbeaten in the ring and life.

NO. 5 OMAR FIGUEROA TKO 9 NO. 4 DANIEL ESTRADA

Aug. 16, Carson, Calif. (Showtime)

★ Omar Figueroa retained a title and Daniel Estrada won over the crowd in a dramatic lightweight bout that included adversity before it, bloody exchanges throughout it and a big knockdown at the end.

Figueroa (24-0-1, 18 KOs), the WBC's 135-pound champion, scored the stoppage with a right at just before 1:00 of the ninth. His punches may have had extra motivation behind them after a deep cut over his left eye was caused by a clash of heads in the eighth.

"I was a little concerned that the referee or doctor would stop the fight," Figueroa said.

Estrada (32-3-1, 24 KOs) fought despite losing his sister and niece in an auto accident in Mexico City a couple of weeks before the bout.

"I had the mentality to win but I was up against a great champion," said Estrada, who dedicated the fight to his sister.

CHAMPION YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ SD 12 NO. 7 FIRAT ARSLAN

Aug. 16, Erfurt, Germany

★ Cruiserweight champion Yoan Pablo Hernandez did what he has always done. He survived.

Firat Arslan challenged Hernandez (29-1, 14 KOs) and, according to one judge, the challenge was enough to take the RING and IBF 200-pound titles from the Cuban. Arslan (34-8-2, 21 KOs) was favored on one card 115-113. But Hernandez was a winner on the other two 115-113 and 116-113.

Hernandez escaped with the split decision by scoring points with more precision than power, especially over the later rounds. Arslan appeared to have the champion in trouble early but the German challenger got overly aggressive in the middle rounds, allowing Hernandez to employ tactical skill that was just enough to win.

The narrow victory set up a potential title fight against against Ola Afolabi (21-3-4, 10 KOs), possibly in December.

JENNINGS: NAOKI FUKUDA; KOVALEV: "SUGAR" RAY BAILEY; GARCIA/PETERSON/JACOBS: ED MULHOLLAND; DIRREL/ FIGUEROA: STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES HERNANDEZ: KARINA HESSLAND/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHT RESULTS

THROUGH FIGHTS OF AUG. 17, 2014 (CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Charles Martin TKO 3 Kertson Manswell
Bryant Jennings SD 12 Mike Perez
Akhror Muralimov TKO 2 Jason Bergman
Lucas Browne UD 12 Andriy Rudenko
Zhang Zhilei TKO 1 Curtis Lee Tate
Vyacheslav Glazkov MD 10 Derric Rossy
Dominic Breazeale KO 2 Billy Zumbrun
Deontay Wilder TKO 4 Jason Gavern

CRUISERWEIGHTS

William Bezerra KO 1 Ricardo Augusto Souza
Roy Jones Jr. TKO 5 Courtney Fry
Mairis Briedis TKO 9 Joey Vegas
Ola Afolabi TKO 3 Anthony Caputo Smith
William Bezerra KO 1 Mauricio Bueno de Morais
Yoan Pablo Hernandez SD 12 Firat Arslan

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Isidro Prieto TKO 5 Miguel Cobas
Robin Krasniqi UD 12 Oleksandr Cherviak
Dominic Boesel UD 10 Daniel Regi
Maxim Vlasov KO 7 Ruben Acosta
Tommy Karpency UD 10 Dhafir Smith
Damien Hooper KO 7 Joel Casey
Gabriel Campillo TKO 5 Thomas Williams Jr.
Andre Dirrell TKO 5 Vladine Biosse
Isaac Chilemba TKO 7 Cory Cummings
Sergey Kovalev TKO 2 Blake Caparello
Ryno Liebenberg UD 12 Denis Grachev
Vasily Lepikhin TKO 5 Robert Berridge

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Zac Dunn TKO 4 Yutaka Oishi
Robert Stieglitz TKO 10 Sergey Khomitsky
Chris Eubank Jr. TKO 1 Ivan Jukic
Rohan Murdock KO 5 Gaston Vega
Julius Jackson TKO 2 Crispulo Andino
Ben McCulloch TKO 4 Yodkhunsuk Mor Poowana
Schiller Hyppolite UD 10 JJ McDonagh
Tyron Zeuge TKO 9 Baker Barakat
Anthony Dirrell UD 12 Sakio Bika

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Martin Rios KO 5 Billi Godoy
Caleb Truax UD 10 Derek Ennis
Michel Soro D 10 Antoine Douglas
Billy Joe Saunders KO 8 Emanuele Blandamura
Gennady Golovkin TKO 3 Daniel Geale
Claudio Abalos SD 12 Mateo Veron
Dmitry Chudinov TKO 3 Mehdi Bouadla
Arif Magomedov UD 12 Patrick Mendy
Daniel Jacobs TKO 5 Jarrod Fletcher

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Liam Smith KO 6 Jason Welborn
Liam Williams TKO 6 Ronnie Heffron
Kanat Islam KO 5 Fidel Munoz
Willie Nelson UD 10 Luis Grajeda
Alejandro Barrera UD 10 Abner Lopez
Yuki Nonaka UD 10 Kengo Nagashima
Marcelo Esteban Coceres TKO 8 Sergio Sanders
Jack Culcay UD 12 Isaac Real

WELTERWEIGHTS

Jose Lopez TD 6 Cristian Favela
Roberto Garcia UD 10 Breidis Prescott
Suyon Takayama MD 10 Koshinmaru Saito
Sirimongkol Singwancha KO 3 Omari Ramadan
Leonard Bundu SD 12 Frankie Gavin
Silverio Ortiz UD 10 Fernando Castaneda
Brandon Rios DQ 9 Diego Chaves
Deniz Ilbay TKO 8 Ramadhani Shauri
(F) Jennifer Retzke SD 10 Florence Muthoni
Cesar Barrionuevo KO 1 Jhon Teheran
Edgar Ortega MD 10 Daniel Rosario Cruz
Samuel Vasquez TKO 9 James Stevenson
Sadam Ali SD 10 Jeremy Bryan
Alan Sanchez KO 3 Jose Luis Ramirez Jr.
Kell Brook MD 12 Shawn Porter

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Nihito Arakawa UD 10 Akihiro Kondo
(F) Fernanda Alegre TKO 2 Dalia Vasarhelyi
Frankie Gomez UD 10 Vernon Paris
Aik Shakhnazaryan KO 5 Ramon De La Cruz Sena
Julius Indongo TKO 3 Ishmael Kuchocha
Jack Catterall TKO 2 Nathan Brough
Hiroki Okada UD 10 Shamgar Koichi
Jessie Vargas UD 12 Anton Novikov
Chad Bennett TKO 5 Stevi Ferdinandus
Monty Meza Clay TKO 10 Alan Herrera
Lamont Peterson TKO 10 Edgar Santana
Danny Garcia KO 2 Rod Salka
Anthony Peterson KO 1 Edgar Riovalle
Keita Obara TKO 12 Shinya Iwabuchi
Fernando Angulo UD 10 Daniel Lopez
Haskell Rhodes TKO 4 John Nater

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Yoshitaka Kato TKO 8 Tsukasa Saito
Terry Flanagan TKO 7 Martin Gethin
Liam Walsh KO 4 Kevin Hooper
Leonardo Doronio KO 7 Al Rivera
Sergio Gil UD 12 Cristian Coria
Manuel Lancia UD 10 Pasquale Di Silvio
(F) Olivia Gerula UD 8 Kaliesha West
(F) Amanda Serrano KO 6 Maria Maderna
Jose Pedraza TKO 6 Juan Carlos Martinez
Denis Shafikov TKO 9 Rustam Nugaev
Michal Chudecki UD 10 Felix Lora
Felix Verdejo UD 8 Oscar Bravo
Jorge Linares KO 2 Ira Terry
Omar Figueroa TKO 9 Daniel Estrada

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Israel Perez TKO 8 Carlos Rodriguez
Andrey Klimov TKO 8 Guillermo Avila
Daiki Kaneko TKO 4 Cirilo Espino
Sergio Thompson UD 10 Adones Aguelo
Ardie Boyose TKO 2 Richard Betos
Abner Cotto SD 10 Jerry Belmontes
Corey McConnell TD 7 Ryan Sermona
(F) Eva Wahlstrom UD 10 Djemilla Gontaruk

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Fernando Montiel KO 1 Jesus Rios
Tomas Rojas UD 10 Irving Berry

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Shingo Wake TKO 10 Jaesung Lee
Bernabe Concepcion D 3 Eden Sonsona
JR Magboo SD 12 Virgil Puton
Fabian Orozco UD 10 Lucas Carranza
Oscar Escandon KO 6 Julian Aristule
Andres Gutierrez UD 12 Mario Macias
Thabo Sonjica UD 12 Roli Gasca
Luis Melendez UD 10 Raul Hirales
Horacio Garcia TKO 5 Jonathan Perez
Jose Lopez MD 8 Roberto Castaneda

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Rodrigo Guerrero TKO 8 Takahiro Shigee
Immanuel Naidjala W 12 Joseph Hilongwa
Richard Pumicpic UD 10 Rex Olisa
Ryo Akaho UD 10 Masaaki Serie
Luis May UD 10 Daniel Noriega
Drian Francisco KO 3 Manuel De Los Reyes Herrera
Kentaro Masuda KO 3 Konosuke Tomiyama
(F) Carolina Rodriguez SD 10 Dayana Cordero
(F) Jessica Gonzalez SD 10 Estrella Valverde

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

David Carmona UD 10 Ricardo Rodriguez
Petchbarngborn Kokietgym UD 12 Fernando Lumacad
Jason Canoy TKO 8 Giovanni Escaner
Daniel Lozano TKO 8 Antonio Garcia
Sho Ishida UD 10 Yohei Tobe
Ivan Morales TKO 5 Cesar Canchila

FLYWEIGHTS

Abmerk Shindjuu W 12 Japhet Uutoni
(F) Simona Galassi UD 10 Laetitia Arzalier

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Mario Rodriguez UD 10 Junior Granados
Benezer Alolod TKO 5 Jomar Fajardo
(F) Naoko Shibata TKO 9 Ana Arrazola
Stamp Kiatniwat UD 12 Kwanthai Sithmorseng

STRAWWEIGHTS

Xiong Zhao Zhong TKO 9 Jack Amisa
Knockout CP Freshmart TKO 5 Cris Alfante
(F) Anabel Ortiz TKO 3 Neisi Torres
(F atomweight) Momo Koseki TKO 8 Denise Castle
Francisco Rodriguez Jr. UD 12 Katsunari Takayama
(F) Victoria Argueta SD 10 Alondra Garcia

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COMING UP

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND LEM SATTERFIELD.

SEPTEMBER

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Marcos Maidana will do it again on Sept. 13.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. VS. MARCOS MAIDANA II

Sept. 13 / MGM Grand, Las Vegas

Division: Welterweight (for Mayweather's RING, WBA and WBC titles)

TV: Showtime Pay-Per-View

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Also fighting: Leo Santa Cruz vs. Manuel Roman, junior featherweights (for Santa Cruz's WBC title); Miguel Vazquez vs. Mickey Bey, lightweights (for Vazquez's IBF title); Humberto Soto vs. John Molina, junior welterweights; Alfredo Angulo vs. James De la Rosa, middleweights

Significance: Maidana (35-4, 31 KOs) earned a second shot at Mayweather (46-0, 26 KOs) by giving the pound-for-pound king a surprisingly competitive fight in May. Can the aggressive Argentine cause more mischief? Something tells us that Mayweather will adjust and dominate.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Mayweather UD; Fischer – Mayweather UD; Satterfield – Mayweather UD

SEPT. 13 – Scott Quigg vs. Stephane Jamoye, junior featherweights, Manchester, England

SEPT. 16 – Kazuto Ioka vs. Pablo Carrillo, flyweights, Tokyo

SEPT. 20 – George Groves vs. Christopher Rebrasse, super middleweights, London

SEPT. 20 – Thabiso Mchunu vs. Garrett Wilson, cruiserweights, Mashantucket, Conn. (NBC)

SEPT. 20 – Andy Ruiz vs. Sergei Liakhovich, heavyweights, Phoenix (UniMas)

SEPT. 20 – Orlando Salido vs. Terdsak Kokietgym, junior lightweights, Ciudad Obregon, Mexico

SEPT. 20 – Carlos Cuadras vs. Sonny Boy Jaro, junior bantamweights (for Cuadras' WBC title), Los Mochis, Mexico

SEPT. 26 – Anselmo Moreno vs. Juan Carlos Payano, bantamweights (for Moreno's WBA title), Mesquite, Texas (Fox Sports 1)

SEPT. 27 – Arthur Abraham vs. Paul Smith, super middleweights (for Abraham's WBO title), Kiel, Germany

SEPT. 27 – Krzysztof Wlodarczyk vs. Grigory Drozd, cruiserweights (for Wlodarczyk's WBC title), Moscow

SEPT. 27 – Denis Lebedev vs. Pawel Kolodziej, cruiserweights (for Lebedev's WBA title), Moscow

SEPT. 29 – Antonio Tarver vs. Johnathon Banks, heavyweights, Hidalgo, Texas (Fox Sports 1)

MAYWEATHER/GOLOVKIN: MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES; HOPKINS: ETHAN MILLER

OCTOBER

GENNADY GOLOVKIN VS. MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO

Oct. 18 / StubHub Center, Carson, Calif.

Division: Middleweight (for Golovkin's WBA title)

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Significance: Rubio (59-6-1, 51 KOs) is a fearless slugger with solid skills and experience, which could make things interesting for a while. The problem is that his aggressive style suits Golovkin (30-0, 27 KOs) well. It's reasonable to expect the Kazakhstani's 18th consecutive knockout.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Golovkin KO 6; Fischer – Golovkin KO 8; Satterfield – Golovkin KO 7

OCT. 1 – Hassan N'Dam N'Jikam vs. Curtis Stevens, middleweights, Santa Monica, Calif.

OCT. 4 – Rances Barthelemy vs. Fernando Saucedo, junior lightweights (for Barthelemy's IBF title)

OCT. 8 – Sam Soliman vs. Jermain Taylor, middlweights (for Soliman's IBF title), ESPN2

OCT. 11 – Carlos Molina vs. Cornelius Bundrage, junior middleweights (for Molina's IBF title), Cancun, Mexico

OCT. 11 – Lee Selby vs. Joel Brunker, featherweights, London

OCT. 24 – Carlos Takam vs. Alexander Povetkin, heavyweights, Moscow

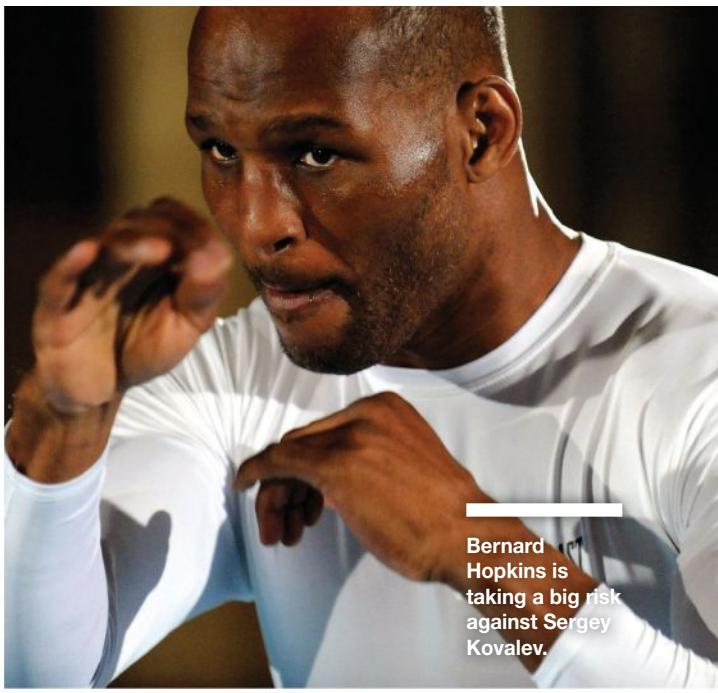
OCT. 25 – Martin Murray vs. Domenico Spada, middleweights, Monte Carlo

OCT. 25 – Randy Caballero vs. Stuart Hall, bantamweights (for the vacant IBF title), Monte Carlo

OCT. 25 – Hekkie Budler vs. Xiong Zhao Zhong, strawweights (for Budler's WBA title), Monte Carlo

Will Marco Antonio Rubio be any different from Gennady Golovkin's past opponents?

NOVEMBER



Bernard Hopkins is taking a big risk against Sergey Kovalev.

SERGEY KOVALEV VS. BERNARD HOPKINS

Nov. 8 / Atlantic City

Division: Light heavyweight (for Hopkins' WBA and IBF and Kovalev's WBO titles)

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★

Significance: Hopkins (55-6-2, 32 KOs) has surprised us many times but this might be pushing things: The Alien turns 50 in January and Kovalev (25-0-1, 23 KOs) is a monster. Hopkins evidently believes he can outbox the Russian and avoid big shots. Tough, tough assignment.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Kovalev KO 9; Fischer – Kovalev KO 12; Satterfield – Hopkins MD

PETER QUILLIN VS. MATT KOROBOV

Nov. 8 / New York or Washington, D.C.

Division: Middleweight (for Quillin's WBO title)

TV: TBA

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★

Significance: The talented Quillin (31-0, 22 KOs) has feasted on second-tier contenders. No change here. Korobov (24-0, 14 KOs) was once a highly touted prospect but has been inconsistent as a pro, looking good one moment and catatonic the next. Who will show up on Nov. 8?

Prediction: Rosenthal – Quillin UD 12; Fischer – Korobov SD 12; Satterfield – Quillin UD

NOV. 1 – Tomoki Kameda vs. Alejandro Hernandez, bantamweights (for Kameda's WBO title), Chicago

NOV. 22 – Manny Pacquiao vs. Chris Algieri, welterweights (for Pacquiao's WBO title), Macau (HBO Pay-Per-View)

NOV. 22 – Tyson Fury vs. Dereck Chisora, heavyweights, London

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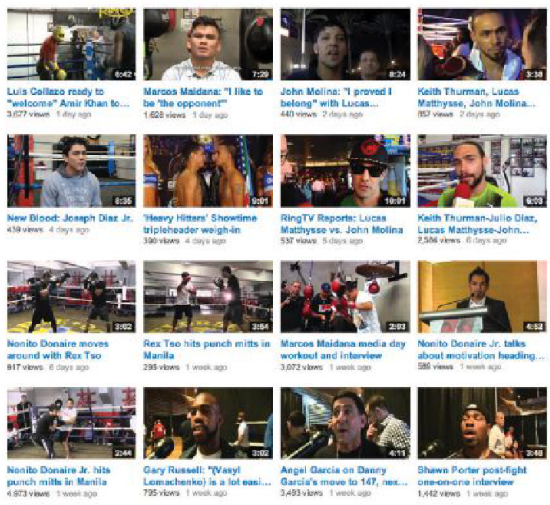

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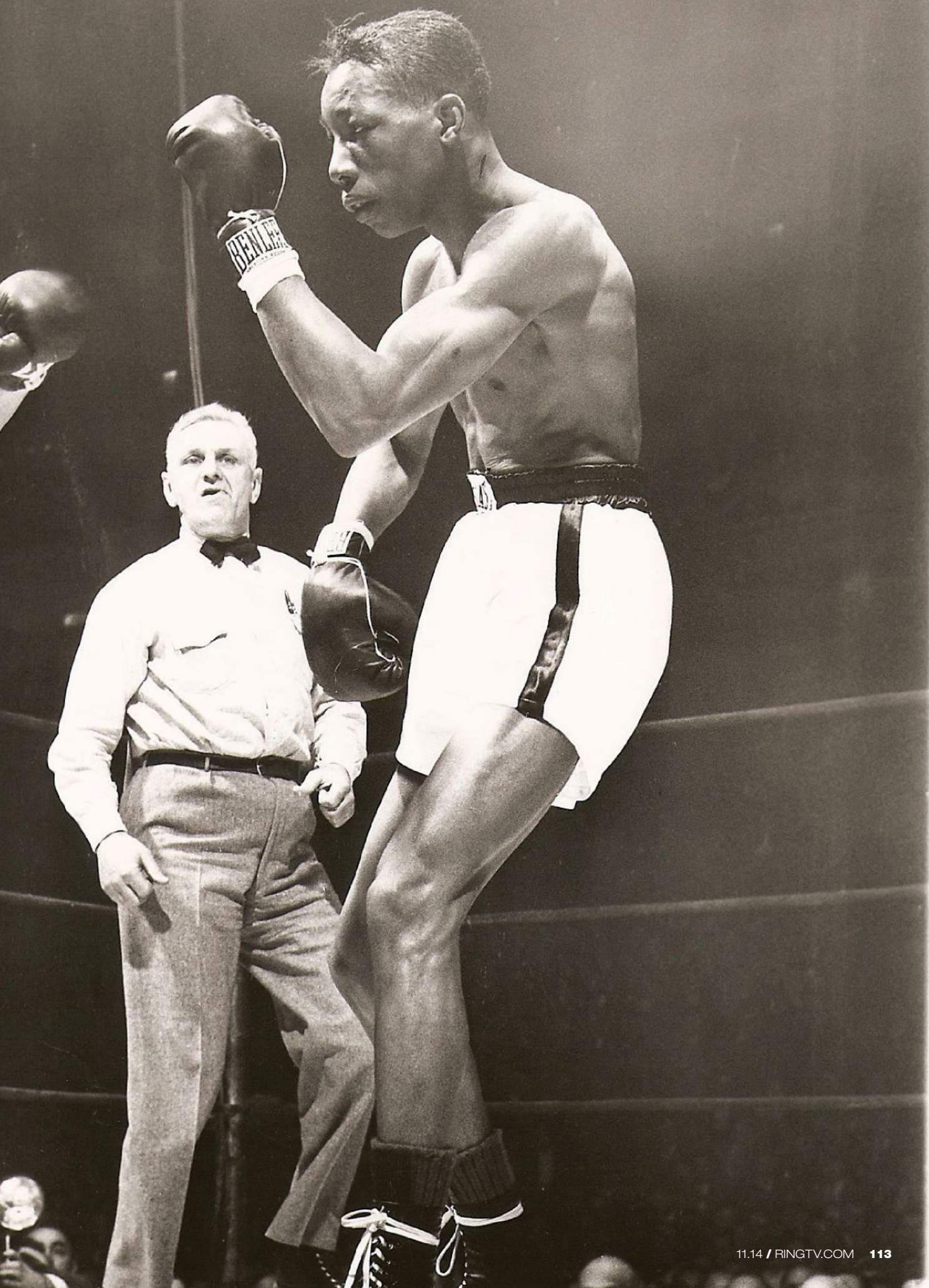
— BOC Member José Chegüi Torres

SAVAGE SERIES

The four-fight series between Willie Pep (left) and Sandy Saddler between 1948 and 1951 was as brutal as it gets. Pep was known as a slick, athletic boxer who legend has it once won a round without throwing punch. However, not even his defensive skills could peel Saddler off him. Saddler was stronger, younger and rougher (Pep would say dirtier) than Pep, which made for a classic boxer vs. puncher series. Saddler put Pep down three times and stopped him in the fourth round to take Pep's featherweight title in their first fight, in October 1948. Pep survived a mauling to win a unanimous decision in the rematch less than four months later in THE RING Fight of the Year. In the third fight, in September 1950, Pep barely survived a knockdown in the third round and had to quit in the eighth with a separated shoulder. That allowed Saddler to regain the title. The fourth fight was one of the dirtiest of the era. The fighters used every dirty trick in the book – holding and hitting, wrestling, eye gouging, you name it – in order to gain an advantage in a close fight. In the end, Saddler won when Pep quit after nine rounds because of pain from a deep cut over his right eye. There was a lot of pain to go around in that rivalry.



AT THE FIGHTS

Corona Extra BOXING

1. Tiffany Lam with Chris Arreola at the Keith Thurman-Julio Diaz card in April in Carson, Calif. **2.** Dr. Ian Noel (left) with Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson at the Lamont Peterson-Dierry Jean card in January in Washington, D.C. **3.** Pierre Burger (left) with Chris Byrd at the Ryno Liebenberg-Denis Grachev card in August in Johannesburg, South Africa. **4.** Rudy Gonzalez (front) and his father, Manny Ramirez (background), with Ronnie Shields at the Roberto Garcia-Breidis Prescott card in July in Chicago. **5.** Vincent Gardea (left) and Jesse Gardea flank Vito Antuofermo at the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June in Canastota, N.Y. **6.** Phillip Muniz (left) with Robert Guerrero at the Andre Ward-Chad Dawson weigh-in in 2012 in Oakland, Calif. **7.** Jason Potter-Rose (right) with Brandon Rios at the Manny Pacquiao-Tim Bradley card in April in Las Vegas.

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